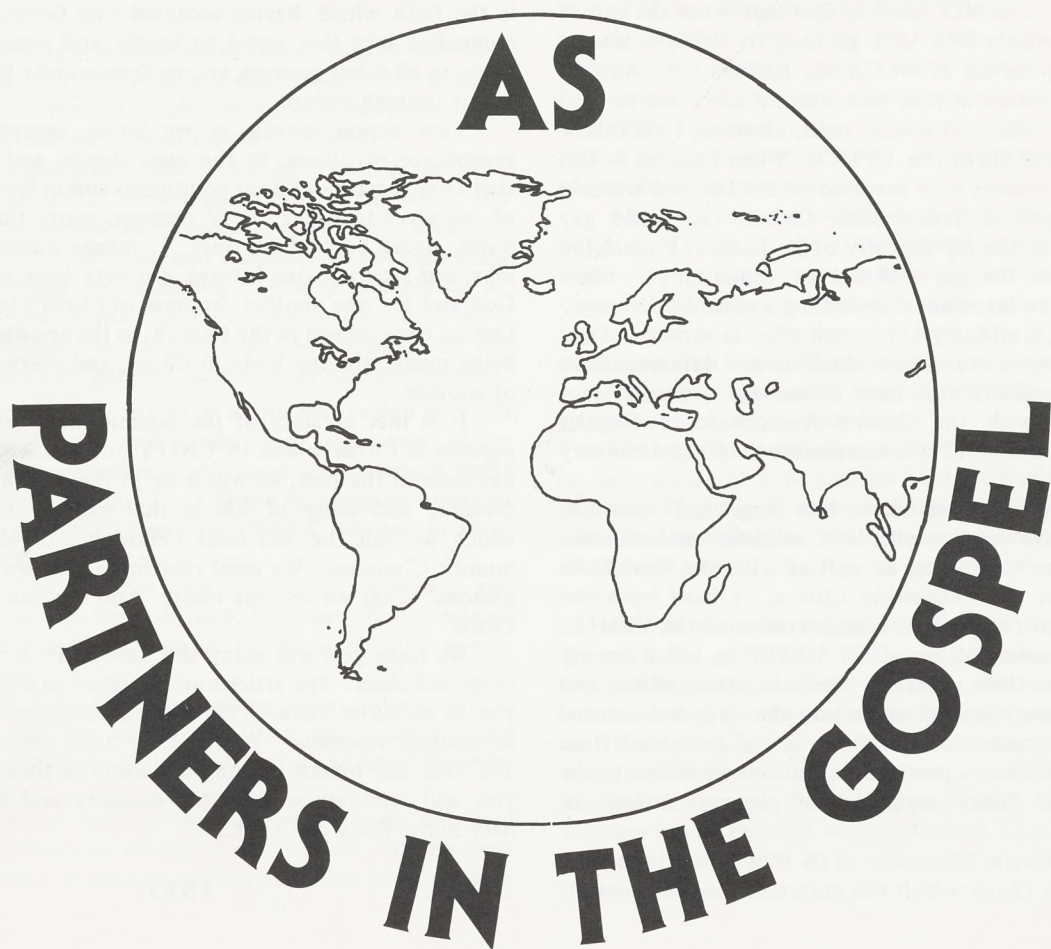


IN UNITY

MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
MARCH/APRIL 1981

**WE ARE
EVERYWHERE**

AS



WORLD CHURCH EXTENSION

STEVEN D. PRESTON

Many tasks in life, while needful and essential, are difficult to perform. Recording these thoughts, and presenting them, has been such a task.

It is true, as stated in the Editorial of the previous issue, that I am not a member of an MCC church. But that is not the end of the matter. My contacts with MCC go back to 1974, to several visits to the worship service of MCC-Santa Barbara, CA. As with many of us, my situation at that time did not allow me to continue to attend. For the next several years, however, I did follow closely the growth and life of the UFMCC. When I moved to Los Angeles in 1978, I became very involved in the life and worship of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church (a mostly gay congregation), and in the lay ministry of its Lazarus Project (an outreach ministry to the gay and lesbian community). Since 1979, I have also been involved in organizing and leading Evangelicals Together, Inc., a ministry of reconciliation in support of gay and lesbian Christians in evangelical churches and denominations in Southern California. (I also have a theology degree from a seminary affiliated with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, and in 1972 was Licensed to the Gospel Ministry by a Baptist church).

In both of my involvements in Los Angeles, I have had regular and supportive contact with MCC ministers and churches throughout Southern California, as well as with the Rev. Elder Perry and others in the Fellowship offices. I have been and remain supportive of the faith, life, and witness of the UFMCC. My position as Interim Editor of IN UNITY is based on my vocation for the past three years as a freelance writer, editor, and literary research consultant. (I might add that it is not unusual for a religious denomination to hire editorial personnel from outside the denomination; a professional editor will adhere to the established Editorial Policy regardless of personal feelings or affiliations.)

I come to the Interim Editorship of IN UNITY with the same strong faith in Jesus Christ which the magazine itself evinces. It

is the same faith upon which and for which the UFMCC stands. It is the faith which accepts the Gospel message that the love of God in Jesus Christ is available for the taking to *all* persons in this world, with no pre-conditions, no strings, *no ifs, ands, or buts!* It is the faith which, having accepted that Gospel message, is then compelled into this world to loudly and clearly tell that Good News to all other persons, and to demonstrate that love of God in Christ through action.

That action means, as we know, acceptance of self and acceptance of others, to the *same* degree and in the *same* way that God accepts—without conditions and in love. It means giving of ourselves to other needy persons; many times giving until it hurts, giving beyond hurting! It means putting our selves, our jobs, our security, our futures, our very lives, on the line for our God and for one another, because of Christ's love. And it means finding our oneness in the Church; as the apostle Paul wrote: We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

It is that mystery of the organic unity of so many diverse persons in Christ which IN UNITY presents and celebrates! As it has been in the past, so will it be in the future: a picture of the diversity and unity of life in that part of the Body of Christ which we call the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We need remember that we are many diverse persons. That we are one body. And that our oneness occurs in Christ.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of IN UNITY. The look is fresh and clean. The articles are designed to inform and stimulate you to an active faith. The news is as current as is possible in a bi-monthly magazine. We sincerely hope you will feel the pulse and hear the breath of the Fellowship in these pages. We hope you will celebrate with us the diversity and the unity that we have in the Body of Christ.

ENJOY!

"Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:19-20.

I remember reading a bumper sticker on an Elder's car which stated: "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!" When it comes to the work of World Church Extension in our Fellowship, that bumper sticker echoes my sentiments completely.

The great commandment that Jesus left with us is being adhered to in the UFMCC. We *are* going into all the world and carrying the good news that Jesus came to earth, lived, died, was buried, and arose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God. We teach that reconciliation to God is possible for *all* people because of the sacrifice of Jesus. We teach that Jesus is *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life and that Jesus brought us the message that God loves *all* persons, including gay men and lesbians.

Because of these beliefs, ministers in our Fellowship have left comfortable homes, friends, and family to go to far away places to preach and teach the message of this good news. Robert Wolfe went to Canada, and Reverend Lee Carlton to Australia. Both of these individuals sacrificed to see the UFMCC planted in these countries and God blessed our work there.

We now have Churches not only in the USA, Australia, and Canada, but also now in Great Britain, Denmark, New Zealand, Nigeria and South Africa, all because of the sacrifice of people and finances.

The wonderful thing that is happening is that more people in our Fellowship - not just clergy, but laity also - are yielding themselves to the call of the Holy Spirit and are saying, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

During my recent visit to New Zealand I met with two members of our Church in Auckland who shared with me their desire to go to Lagos, Nigeria to open a Christian book store in

the name of our Fellowship. One of these brothers had spent eleven years there as a lay missionary in the operations of a chain of bookstores for a large missionary organization and feels led of the Lord to return under the auspices of The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

As The Reverend Elder Jean White reported to the Board of Elders in her capacity as Executive Secretary for World Church Extension, "The fields are white unto harvest."

This last month, our Churches all over the world received special offerings for this work. The next issue of IN UNITY will report the total received.

As all of us are aware, in August we will be meeting in Houston, Texas, for the 10th General Conference of our Fellowship. As is our custom, we will be highlighting the work of World Church Extension on Thursday night and will receive a special love offering. In the past, we have always given thousands of dollars on that night. However, we have never really been serious in giving. We have given very emotionally. This year I have a special request of our Churches.

I personally would like to charge each of our Church groups to raise a mile of U.S. pennies for that World Church Extension offering. That would be equal to \$846 U.S. If at least 100 of our Churches brought that much in their General Conference World Church Extension offering, we would raise over \$84,000 in that offering.

Out of that offering, we *can* buy the van for our Churches in Nigeria. We *could* send and support a minister for one year to work in Central and South America. We *can* help provide transportation support for an Extension Area minister to visit the U.S. and study at STI for at least six months. Again, the needs are great and if we will all do our best we *can* raise the offering we need to fund many World Church Extension programs. All God requires is our best. If we do our best, God, through our giving, will supply our needs.



IN UNITY

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MARCH/APRIL 1981

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The appearance of a name in this magazine does not denote affectional or sexual preference.

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*UFMCC and MCC are the service marks of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

UFMCC DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. The Old Testament foretells him, the New Testament presents him, and the Christian Church proclaims him in every age and in every land.

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene. We believe:

1. In one triune God, of one substance, in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, God being the Creator of all, the Prime Mover and Spirit of the Universe.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus . . . The Christ . . . historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is the Father's most divine Son, as well as being the Son of Man, born of Woman. And that by total subservience to God, the Father, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by Grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Master. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the Fellowship of the Faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless, and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

(Article III, Section A of UFMCC By-Laws)

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LETTERS

To the Elders:

We, the members and friends of De Colores MCC, take this opportunity to protest your action in regard to IN UNITY. We are dismayed that you have so little regard for our intelligence that you consider it necessary to "protect" us from varying opinions as expressed in our magazine. Since T. Earlye Scott has been the editor of IN UNITY, it has truly become a journal in which a variety of pluralistic opinions may be expressed. It has become a vehicle for the ideas and experiences of both clergy and laity. In taking this action to relegate IN UNITY to an in-house organ, the Board of Elders has removed our options and expression as a thinking, growing people.

Most of us are from church backgrounds which are both repressive and dictatorial. We had thought that in UFMCC we had found an alternative to this oppression. It appears to us that this freedom which we have come to value so greatly is in danger of being subverted in favor of "safe" conformity.

For all of these reasons, we as a congregation, have today agreed to cancel our subscription to IN UNITY. We cannot support an "in-house organ" which does not reflect the freedom and diversity which we have come to believe is a part of UFMCC. If we had wanted to remain in a repressive climate we would have continued in our former churches and/or joined the Moral Majority.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank T. Earlye Scott for providing us with a magazine which both gave opportunity for growth and encouraged this growth. Of course, we have not always agreed with all the articles, but we have been stimulated by them to think, and this is, after all, the foundation of growth.

Because we feel so strongly about the issues of censorship and opinion control, we intend to share these feelings with pastors, staff, delegates, members and friends of other UFMCC congregations. It is our sincere hope that this letter and the letters which you are and will be receiving from individuals and from other churches will convince the Board of Elders that we are indeed a diverse body of Christians who value our freedom. And that, as a result of this, IN UNITY will be returned

to us as a true news and opinion journal for an alive and growing Fellowship.

With concerned prayerfulness,

MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF
DE COLORES MCC
Canoga Park, CA

Dear Editor,

In the January/February issue we found that we have lost one of the most capable editors that we have had working in a long time. She was a professional journalist, not a theologian, and ran the publication as an editor should, based on what is sent in, evaluated (sometimes edited where necessary), balanced by opposing opinions where possible, and then put it all together in a readable format that we enjoyed.

What will come out of all this now? Will some of the people who have been supporters of IN UNITY cancel their subscriptions because they want to see a "free publication" without Elder interference? Will the people who were upset about the original Hamilton article cancel theirs? Will the people who are pacifists cancel theirs because they don't want to see the fighting (that the Hamilton article seems to have created)? Will the new editorial board be one of censorship? After all those people cancel their subscriptions, who will be left? Do we want to have a publication that depends on the bulk subscriptions that the churches purchase? If we depend on the churches to support the publication through subscriptions then we are setting IN UNITY up to the whims of the local boards (such as the one who cancelled because their board (?) (of directors, of deacons, or pressure from a vocal minority) (sounds like Moral Majority) decided they could no longer use it as an outreach tool. Do we want a publication that is dependent on the whims of various boards?

I feel that IN UNITY should be just what the editorial policy said it is: "the official news and opinion journal." And that should mean everyone's opinion, not an edited version, or if it conforms to the views of a majority (moral or otherwise). If I don't agree with the opinion of the

writer, that is my option, but I don't want ANYONE, an individual or a group (editorial board, board of elders, etc.) denying me access to those articles. The strength of IN UNITY is in individual subscribers, not listening to churches that use it as an outreach.

Your brother in Christ,

Richard S. Roberts, Jr.
Philadelphia, PA

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Approximately 10% of IN UNITY's circulation is by individual subscription; the remaining 90% is by bulk sales - almost all through local churches.)

To: Editorial Board

Dear Christians:

As a lay member of the UFMCC since 1971, I applaud the recent decision of the Board of Elders to establish an editorial board. I do not believe the content of IN UNITY as edited by T. Earlye Scott was a balanced representation of the Fellowship. In my opinion IN UNITY should be as it was originally founded, the news and outreach organ of the UFMCC. It should be a publication we can point to with pride, keep on our coffee tables and distribute to those who would like to know what we stand for and who we are.

Ms. Scott may be assured that IN UNITY is far from dead because she has left it. Having helped print, collate, staple and distribute IN UNITY in its infancy, I have seen the editors come and go. IN UNITY *does* belong to the UFMCC and I, as a member, trust the *elected* administrators of our Fellowship to see to it that

Letters to IN UNITY are welcome, and are printed as space and interest allow. All letters should be written in inclusive language or they will be edited to follow the guidelines established by the General Conference. Letters must be signed or they cannot be published. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject any letter for length, clarification, or with regard to libel. Letters must conform to other provisions of the Editorial Policy as well.

LETTERS

the magazine is edited in such a manner as to present a positive, pro-Fellowship, format. It would be interesting to discover whether or not Ms. Scott, when previously employed by the newspaper or UPI was permitted the "freedom of speech" to repeatedly attack those organizations and their managements in the pages of their own publications. In any case, I don't believe such a forum should be provided for Ms. Scott or anyone else.

Since the subject has been batted around by everyone else and since my previous letter to the editor regarding the June/July issue was "misplaced" I will attempt again to exercise my free speech.

This Fellowship was founded on and in fact is a Trinitarian Christian Church and a member of the Universal Body of Christ. There are as many religious denominations represented among our members as there are religious denominations I would guess. Our members all received information on the UFMCC statement of faith prior to becoming a member and certainly before putting on a collar and applying for licensing.

The MCAC should not allow credentialing of people, regardless of their academic excellence, if they do not accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of this world. If to enforce this is dogmatic, then so be it.

True, there is and always will be diversity of opinion and style in this Fellowship, but one thing that has to remain constant is that we remain always a Christian body. There is no room, in my opinion, for argument in this Fellowship about the diety or non-diety of Christ.

Years ago, at the old "Mother" Church on 22nd and Union Streets in Los Angeles, the non-Christian Friends of MCC-LA petitioned to gain voting rights. Their argument went something like this: "Christ was a Jew, you know, and after all we all serve the same God" or "MCC is more than *just* a church, and while we do not believe in Christ as God, we do support the social/service part of the church program and therefore deserve a voice in its government"

That petition failed because the vast majority felt we could not permit non-Christians to take part in running a Christian church. I think the vast majority of the UFMCC still feels that way. But that is not the end of the story. Rev. Perry encouraged and helped that group to form its own synagogue, Beth Chayim Chadashim, which

now is alive and well in West Los Angeles in its own property.

I have never been one to say "Love it or leave it"; in fact I have paid my dues in all of the liberation struggles. However, division may be the only peaceful answer. Non-partisan political activity is one thing but when it comes to religion and this Fellowship in particular, Jesus Christ will be there at the helm yesterday, today and forever. The people of UFMCC will see to that.

Looking forward to a new IN UNITY,

Patricia G. Underwood
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Editor:

Some of the most productive things to have happened in my life have happened after my roommate has told me, "You should share that thought with someone who would profit by it." So after he chastised me for deciding not to write to you, I decided to write to you.

First, I admire T. Earlye Scott's principles and the standing for them. I hope Scott's resigning from IN UNITY won't be the end of Scott's doing productive things.

Second, I believe a magazine of UFMCC must support MCC. And MCC is a Jesus Christ, the all-powerful Creator, organization. I could not belong to MCC otherwise. The Bible commands that.

Other thoughts and ideas should be discussed, but some other forum can do that rather than the "in house" magazine. God bless The Gay Christian for that.

I don't fit any mold that world, Texas, or Houston residents may fit and I don't want to insult anyone who intends no harm. However, I am very comfortable with IN UNITY as a Jesus Christ-MCC centered magazine. I want to encourage the Board of Elders to continue in this line.

Third, the January-February issue of IN UNITY is very good. I enjoyed the articles, thoughts, and information on "burnout." "Burnout" is very relevant to all people in all walks of life. It is a very real occurrence that must be dealt with continually.

I regret the "Bottom Line" editorial is such a petty article. That "most journalists" do not respect in-house magazines is an unsupportable statement. In-house magazines are what they are, and accepted and respected, if good, for what they are. The bigoted background I came from used tricks, such as comparing competing

magazines to high-school and right-wing church publications with limited viewpoints, for insult value. Loaded words and phrases like "weak stomachs," "pabulum," "rest in peace," "hold another funeral," and "not worth the paper it's printed on" are trite devices used to raise emotions. I prefer to leave that kind of manipulation behind me.

And last, I wish the IN UNITY magazine well in future endeavors.

In the Love of Jesus Christ,

Joe K. Grantham
Houston, TX

The Rev'd Troy Perry,
Liaison Elder, IN UNITY

Dear Rev'd Perry:

My congratulations to IN UNITY and editor T. Earlye Scott for a fine issue of IN UNITY, and the excellent treatment of the theme: "Burn Out."

However, with the bouquet comes the brickbat: Editor Scott has missed the point entirely in her editorial in the same edition. She well describes the function of an editorial board for a large metropolitan newspaper or national newsmagazine. This has little bearing on the operation of a smaller newspaper or a denominational magazine. In fact, in the latter case, many publishers take a very active journalistic role, and are quite often journalists themselves.

"Freedom of the press" — whether expressed or implied — is a valued freedom, but cannot be used to solve administrative problems. As founder and publisher of one of the nation's largest gay newspapers, I worked closely with editors, reporters, and even production people. I also met quite regularly with the editorial committee, where articles were reviewed and story ideas explored. Why? Because my investment, my reputation, my life's work — indeed, the newspaper itself — was constantly "on the line" each time it came off the press. The proverbial "buck" did not stop at the editor's desk; it stopped at mine. The newspaper was ultimately my responsibility — journalism, photography, printing, public relations. I had to answer to a Board of Directors, and to the public. I was made painfully aware of this when once sued for several million dollars! (Fortunately the suit was dropped several years — and several dollars — later.)

continued on page 8

LETTERS

The role of the publisher in any publication must be determined by that publisher; the role of the editor is determined by the publisher as well. This is administration, not journalism. I congratulate the Board of Elders for taking a more active role. We cannot convene a General Conference to review every article, or to settle administrative disputes or editorial squabbles. Indeed, the Fellowship is the "absentee" publisher, and the Board of Elders the second-line management, held accountable to and by the publisher. Elders: Congratulations on doing your job!

It is now time to address your attention to yet another publication which the Fellowship publishes: *The Gay Christian*. For too long it has represented only one segment of the theological spectrum in UFMCC. I know that we will again hear "freedom of the press" cried out loudly. I've heard it used many times before to defend a singular position or an injured ego. But if we are to continue to publish — and fund with Fellowship monies — a theological journal, it must reflect the diversity which drew many of us to the Fellowship in the first place. Projected fears of a "fundamentalist" take-over are outweighed by the present domination of "liberals." Either way, those of us in the middle are completely ignored.

The cry of "freedom of the press" will neither cover up our present difficulties nor correct them. The fact is, "freedom of the press" belongs to those who own the press . . . and that is the entire Fellowship. Only great diversity will give us freedom, and reflect the rich spectrum of theological thinking we need to share with each other.

Sincerely in service to Christ
and the Body,

Grant L. Ford
Holy Covenant MCC
Hinsdale, IL

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Ford was, until recently, the publisher of *GayLife*, a prominent newspaper based in Chicago.)

AN OPEN LETTER Another Point of View

I am deeply concerned about some of the viewpoints I have been reading in IN

UNITY. From the vantage-point of Australia, I get the impression that there is a war brewing in the US between conservative evangelicals and liberals in the Fellowship, with the prospect of an all-out fight just around the corner.

This prospect scares me.

Are we, too, in danger of going the way of all flesh—namely, to one extreme or the other?

Are we to become rigid, dogmatic and legalistic like the Pharisees—both of yesterday and today?

Or, perhaps, will we become so broad, so liberal that we will no longer be recognizable as Christians?

I suspect that, as humans, the concept of balance is alien to many of us—or am I being too harsh?

Yet if MCC is to remain dynamic and vital—indeed to be effective in its testimony to the Gospel—we must come to a position of balance.

There is room in our Fellowship for a wide variety of theological perspectives. We must learn to recognize and concede the right of each believer to work out his or her own salvation.

The temptation to censor or to judge is strong, yet the Scriptures are explicit that we have no right to pass judgement on one another (Matt. 7:1,2). God alone has the right of judgement; let us beware of usurping that divine right.

The trap that the Pharisees fell into, and which churches often fall into, is to set up a body of doctrine and proclaim it to be the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

Jesus cut right across this when He proclaimed: "I am the way, the truth, and the life . . ."

Truth is not a theological system. Truth is a person—Jesus Christ.

Put in another way, God alone is the complete Truth. Therefore any set of doctrines or postulations by mere humanity must be at best but a partial glimpse of Truth—and, by its very origin, imperfect. It is not a comforting thought that we may be wrong, but it is the only honest thought.

For our Fellowship to adopt a rigid doctrinal standard or to scrap its present statement would be utter folly. The statement adequately describes our basic foundation which is Jesus the Christ. Anything more would destroy our unity through Christ and overwhelm us with theological factionalism; anything less would rob us of our claim to be Christian, and the unique message of our faith.

Like many others I was irate when I

read the article by the Rev. Karen Ziegler in *THE GAY CHRISTIAN* [*Jesus According To A Lesbian, The Gay Christian, Third Quarter, 1980*], and I strongly disagree with many of her thoughts. I also maintain, though, that she has a perfect right to air her views. She is not answerable to me, nor I to her. In the final analysis, we as individuals are answerable to God alone.

This is where our freedom comes from—that we are not in bondage to each other—and this is also the ultimate responsibility of humankind.

I was far more saddened by the response Karen Ziegler's article provoked from both sides. This spoke to me of intolerance, and failure by both parties to respect and love despite differences of opinion.

It was too much like the ancient conflict of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and it is all to no avail—for not one person will be set free and won to Christ by theological nit-pickings.

I was also surprised by the comments made by the Rev. Shelley Hamilton regarding Christ [*The Trek, IN UNITY, June/July, 1980*]. In fact, I wondered how she can continue in Christian ministry if she cannot accept the deity of Jesus, so clearly attested to in our by-laws and, more important, so crucially central to Christian faith.

However, I repeat that it is not for us to judge, no matter how strongly we feel.

We may feel angry or incensed, but to maintain anger and to feed it past the moment is to disobey Christ. And to pass judgement is to aspire to God's own prerogative.

Personally, I would rather pray for someone than to join a witch-hunt for heretics. God is quite capable of looking after Him/Herself without our help.

Our role, our duty, is to love in an unloving world, and to try to bring to Christ those who are in darkness and captivity.

I appeal both to the conservatives and the liberals. Don't let doctrinal differences sidetrack you from the Gospel of Christ—they certainly won't attract one person to Jesus.

The ultimate and, probably, the only heresy is to be deaf to the voice of God—and to turn our backs on a lost and needy world while we debate microscopic points of what is ultimately only human theology.

Rev. Harry de Jong, Interim Pastor
MCC-Brisbane
Australian District
October 21, 1980

On Wednesday, February 4, 1981, U.S. Congressperson Jon Hinson (Republican of Mississippi) was arrested for committing a homosexual act in a men's room in the Longworth House of Representatives Office Building across the street from the U.S. Capitol.

Hinson was arrested on a charge of oral sodomy, a felony, but the charge was reduced to a misdemeanor offense of attempted sodomy. Officers charged that Hinson had engaged in oral sex with a 28-year-old Library of Congress employee in the House Office Building men's room.

The 38-year-old Congressperson entered a Washington area hospital for "mental and physical fatigue" on the day after pleading not guilty to the reduced charge.

Top Republican officials in the U.S. House of Representatives and in Mississippi called for the Congressperson's resignation from Congress and on Monday, February 9, a staff aide to Hinson announced that he would resign because he "has no other option."

The Reverend Larry J. Uhrig, Pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Washington, D.C., has known Rep. Hinson for three years since the then-Congressional staff person was one of the survivors of a tragic fire in a gay men's movie theatre in Washington in which nine men lost their lives. Hinson successfully ran for Congress after the fire and last August admitted to the press that he had been a victim in the fire and had also previously been arrested for homosexual acts at the Iwo Jima Memorial, a well-known hang-out for homosexual men. He denied that he was a homosexual at that press conference, however.

The arrest of Representative Hinson raises important questions for the lesbian and gay community. Jon Hinson is not like former Representative Bob Bauman, who was arrested last October for soliciting sex from a minor male and who subsequently lost his re-election bid for his House of Representatives seat. Bauman was a virulent anti-gay campaigner whose hypocrisy helped lead to his downfall in Congress. Hinson, though a conservative Republican, had not been an anti-gay activist and kept a very low profile on the issue.

We as a Christian Fellowship can not support public sex in bathrooms. Rep. Hinson's actions are not only wrong, but they are manifestly unnecessary since Washington is a city where gay sex is easily found and is available in safer and more discreet places than public bathrooms. Hinson even had MCC people

who were willing to introduce him to other gay men so that he could begin to lead a relatively normal gay life, even while remaining in the closet.

But while we must be concerned about the Congressperson's choice of sexual playgrounds, we must also reflect that people like Jon Hinson who have homosexual tendencies are often forced into degrading and illegal activities. It is not surprising that one of the men's rooms in the House of Representatives Office Building is a notorious meeting place for homosexual sex. Closeted homosexuals often feel that their only alternative for their sexual outlets is places like that, even though the city they live in is filled with meeting places which are much safer and more respectable. But the mentality of being in the closet is such that closeted people's thought processes don't often make sense to others. The fear and loneliness of the closeted homosexual man or woman is pervasive. And closeted people are sometimes forced to take risks that are incredible in scope and hard to understand for others. Why would a U.S. Congressperson elect to have sex in a public bathroom in one of the House Office Buildings when he resides in a city where there is a plethora of lesbian and gay bars, social and political organizations, and churches and other gay religious groups where he could meet other gay men?

The arrest of Jon Hinson must lead us to greater efforts to work for full civil and human rights for lesbians and gay men. How long will we wait before we make our voices heard, demanding an end to the homophobia and hatred which forces otherwise sensible people like Jon Hinson into such destructive activities? How many martyrs like Jon Hinson must there be before we really are able to minister effectively and with compassion to closeted homosexuals? For regardless of what we think about his actions, Jon Hinson is a martyr to the pernicious effects of homophobia in our society. Rational persons don't take risks which are destructive of their lives and careers; "tearoom sex" is an irrational act committed by a man made irrational by fear, loneliness and the awful reality of society's terrible homophobia.

As Christians, we need to pray for Jon Hinson and all people like him who are trapped into a life of disgrace and shame by the hatred of others.

FORUM is an opinion column, open to expression from the UFMCC family on topics of current interest. The statements made are the opinions of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the UFMCC, the Board of Elders, or the editorial staff. No claim or warrant of accuracy is made by IN UNITY for statements appearing in FORUM. Articles will be accepted in accord with the current Editorial Policy and within the limitations of space and the currency of interest in the subject matter.

LAY-UPS

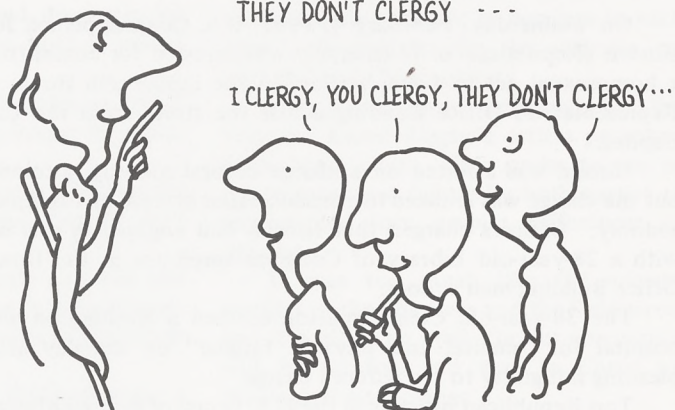
Jean Gralley is Chair of the UFMCC Commission on the Laity.

by Jean Gralley

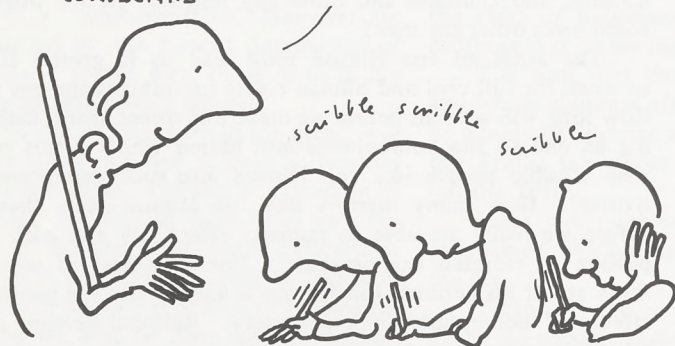


CORRECT! NOW THE VERB "TO CLERGY" [KLĒR'-JE: TO MINISTER IN AN ECCLESIASTICALLY SEGREGATED CAPACITY]

I CLERGY, YOU CLERGY, THEY DON'T CLERGY ---



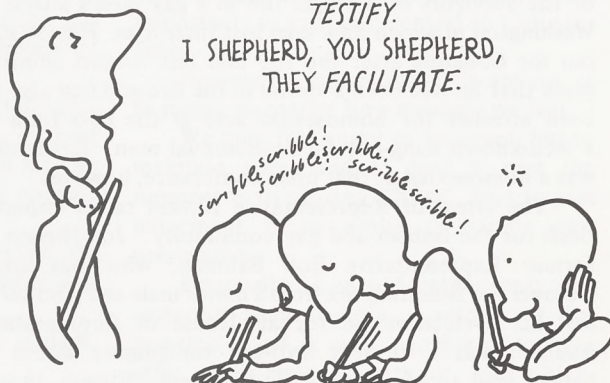
EXCELLENT! NOW UNDER THIS VERB "TO CLERGY" ARE MANY SIMILIAR CONJUGATIONS: I BAPTIZE, YOU BAPTIZE, THEY DON'T BAPTIZE—I CONSECRATE, YOU CONSECRATE, THEY DON'T CONSECRATE —



AND THERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT IRREGULAR CONJUGATIONS:

I PREACH, YOU PREACH, THEY TESTIFY.

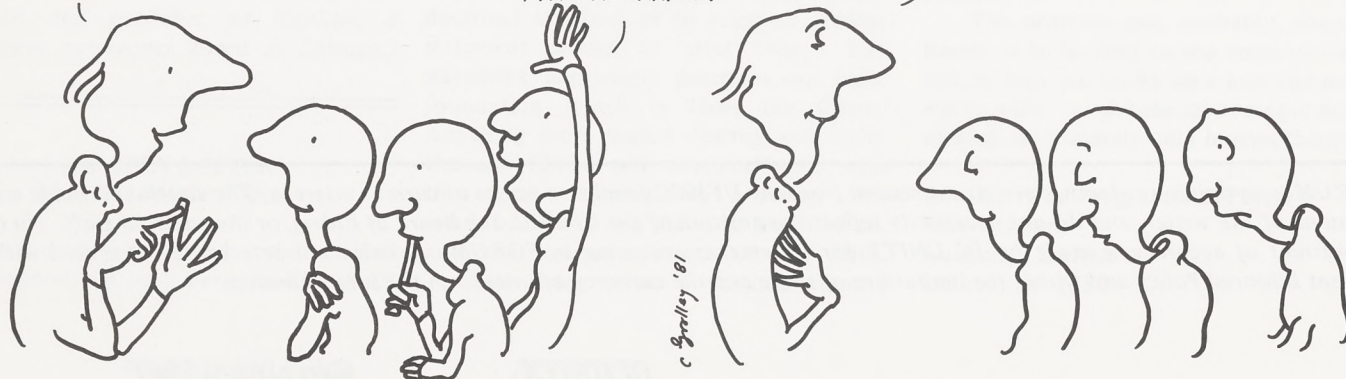
I SHEPHERD, YOU SHEPHERD, THEY FACILITATE.



NOW, IN THIS COURSE, WE'LL ALSO STUDY THE MANY PROGRAMS NEEDED TO CLERGY EFFECTIVELY: THEOLOGY, CHRISTOLOGY, ESCATOLOGY, ECCLESIOLOGY —

WHAT ABOUT THAT VERB FOR EVERYBODY, "TO MINISTER" — ANY PROGRAMS?

WE TELL THEM TO PRAY ABOUT IT.



c. Gralley '81

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

We Are Everywhere

REVEREND ELDER JEAN WHITE
*Executive Secretary
World Church Extension*

Then Jesus said unto his disciples: The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38; KJV)

It is truly wonderful to see the way God is working in the world through the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches! Although things seem slow at times, we see the need for workers, and we constantly hear the cries of the people: "Come over . . . and help us!"

The opportunities seem especially timely in Europe right now. The need of people everywhere for the Gospel and for a family with which to worship God is acute. The need for able and willing workers is even more pressing.

DENMARK. A group from Copenhagen visited the London Church in October of 1980. The work in Copenhagen has been growing. Rev. Bjorn Marcusson telephoned to say that he had been to a large gathering of clergy and theological professors at the University, and that one of the main theologians in Denmark had stood up and declared that he saw a *great* need for the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in Denmark! Public statements like this reveal that God is really moving in this country. Mia Anderson is still anxious to travel to the United States to attend Samaritan Theological Institute for six months. There is much in Denmark for which to praise God!

SWEDEN. The interviews that I had with Stockholm Free Radio seem to be bearing fruit: I have been invited to go to Norway for an international day during the month of May, to explain all about the work of UFMCC and World Church Extension. Stockholm Free Radio has also had conversations about UFMCC for four weeks on their "chat shows," with quite good response. The man who did the recording for the radio show has just spent a month in Sydney, Australia. He attended MCC whilst there, trying to get a different slant on the various MCC congregations.

HUNGARY. We recently received a letter from Adam in Budapest, Hungary, saying how cut off he would feel if it were not for the

literature that we send him regularly, and the knowledge that Metropolitan Community Church exists around the world, and how much he wishes that MCC could begin in his own country. It is in reading letters like this that we realize the harvest truly *is* plenteous, and that the labourers are few! So many times, people feel called of the Lord to give their lives afresh to God and to be a part of a worshipping community; however, most do not feel led to be a leader in that community. This is where our problems really lie: we desperately need workers who are called of God to evangelize and to build-up groups.

ITALY. We have been invited to attend another international conference in May, in Turin, Italy. We will explain about the work of the UFMCC at this conference also. Again, this is a very exciting prospect, as people from many different European countries will be gathering there.

FRANCE. We have managed to contact a group of Christians in Paris, who are interested in knowing more about UFMCC. Two members of this group are due to visit London, England, to attend services and to get to know us.

GERMANY. We have received telephone calls from a German woman who is very anxious to start a feasibility Study Group in Frankfurt. She had attended several MCCs whilst on holidays at various times in America and feels that God is leading her to do something in Germany. She will be visiting England following our return from the United States.

SPAIN. Chris and I have just spent a week in Spain, where we were able to speak with some people and hand out some literature. However, it would have been wonderful to have had even more literature in Spanish to give to the enquirers.

GREAT BRITAIN. Things sometimes move slowly. We receive plenty of enquiries, but we have few persons willing to actually start groups. We *are* excited as we will soon start a feasibility Study Group in the university town of Cambridge. This is the

continued on page 12

A Letter from MCC-Nigeria

January 1, 1981

Dear Rev. Wilson:

My sincere greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has made it possible for us to see the Bright New Year. As God has safely brought us into the year 1981, I hope this year will bring a new life and a new change in all our activities of the year.

I failed to write you before my tour in which I visited the North Eastern State (Bauchi State), where I plan next to open a branch of our church this year. Bauchi State is one of the 19 states of Nigeria, though backward in everything. About 75% of the people are illiterate -- educationally they are very poor.

To have our church here, I must first have a piece of land where we could have a temporary house. Most buildings here are made of mud and constructed a long time ago in the Ancient City, where Christians are not allowed to conduct their services. I must get a postal box at Bauchi and to do this money must come in. (The cost of living at Bauchi is 75% higher than any other part of the country.) Also, to have a room to rent, we must pay for one year in advance before we can move in. A room at Bauchi now costs \$100 per month, so a year would amount to \$1200!

There is a religious war going on now which has claimed more than 4,000 lives, and over 300 police officers have died in the course of the war. Right now people around Kano State and part of Zaria have left their homes. This type of war springing up each time in the North has made it impossible for me to have in mind to establish or to build anything that will cost monies in the North. (In 1978 when I left Zaria finally for Imo State, I wrote you and told you the situation of things in Zaria, but what we are seeing today in Zaria is much worse.)

On my arrival back at Ezinachi I found my wife very sick. She has been admitted at the Mission Hospital at Afikpo. I thank my God she is recovering gradually.

Extend my greetings to all. God bless you all in Christ's name. Amen.

Yours in the Lord,

*Rev. S.O. Maduka
MCC-Ezinachi*

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

town where Norman Pittenger is a theologian. We really feel that this will be a great outreach for us. Birmingham now has its own building, which seems to be prompting growth. We had expected Thames Valley to apply for Mission status, but the necessary papers have not yet been completed.

NEW ZEALAND. Rev. Hein is working well with the Auckland group. They were excited about the Rev. Elder Troy Perry's visit, and are expecting it to be a time of healing and growth for them.

NIGERIA. Letters from Rev. Maduka and Felix Lekee state that things are continuing much the same. Rev. Maduka writes that he is very excited that a well-known businessman has given the group some money to be able to undertake a feasibility study in the area from which he comes. Rev. Maduka writes that this is a great breakthrough, and he asks that all of the Fellowship rejoice with him over this. There are also two men from the Auckland, New Zealand congregation who are anxious to go to Nigeria. One of them has spent many years there as a missionary and speaks two of the dialects fluently. They do not need financial aid, but they would like endorsement from the UFMCC and to help in any way they can to promote the growth of UFMCC in Nigeria!

INDONESIA. From Indonesia, we hear regularly from a young man named Aegus, who is a student in the university there. He is very interested in starting a feasibility Study Group in Indonesia. He has just spent a month in Australia and visited the Sydney Church whilst there.

ARGENTINA. We have received a letter from a man in Argentina, asking if we could send some literature about the Gospel, as he has only ever heard preaching about a God of wrath and judgement. He is interested because he read an article by an MCC minister which spoke of a God of love!

We also need to have a "proper" office in Europe. It is difficult using only a Post Box number and having to receive each person in my own home who passes through London and wishes to know more about MCC and World Church Extension. (I also realize the cash flow problems: the money that we do receive is not consistent and therefore it becomes difficult to rent premises as an office; what would we do for rent when the money that is supposed to come monthly only comes quarterly, or not at all?)

It is exciting to receive all this news, and there are many other things that come through the post regularly. However, all these enquiries produce a problem. We need literature in other languages—which means we need translators. Perhaps *you* know another language than your own, and would be able to translate some of the Fellowship literature for us. Maybe some of you could pray about what the Lord is asking you to do concerning World Church Extension. For some of you it might mean leaving your homes and going to work in another country and helping to build up a group there. For most of you it might mean remaining at home and helping.

The one thing that each and every one of us can do is to pray: prayer is a very important aspect of any evangelization programme. We need *prayer partners*, people who will really intercede with God for souls. The needs are there; the resources are few: *pray with us*, that the Lord will *surely* send labourers into the vineyards!

THE GOOD FIGHT REVISITED

Fitful, sweaty nights. Morning heaves. Blurred vision. Shaking hands. Burning stomach. Mental confusion. Morbid fear and nameless foreboding. Anxiety. Puffy, swollen face. Bloodshot eyes. Wet beds. Guilt. Shame. And always . . . above everything else . . . that trapped, hopeless feeling of being smothered . . . buried alive. I was out of step with the whole world and it was passing me by. I envied people who laughed, enjoyed themselves . . . and seemed to be 'normal.' The sun was shining but I couldn't see it. I was afraid to look up. My whole world was drenched in the taste and smell of scotch . . . when I could afford it. When I couldn't . . . beer would do. I was viewing the world through the bottom of a bottle . . . distorted . . . discolored. I threw up all over my share of friends' bathrooms . . . literally fell into the gutter a number of times, tearing open my scalp twice . . . bleeding all over someone's carpet when I finally made it indoors. Cheating friends . . . lying to everyone . . . I learned to be the perfect con artist just to survive.

That is the way it was . . . the 'good life.' I would have sold my soul to escape the vicious circle, the deadly maelstrom that my life had become!

I did escape! A year ago. I suddenly came face to face with myself and a little voice deep down in my soul whispered, "You're going to die" Something twisted around inside of me . . . perhaps

that God given instinct for self-preservation. I was flooded with the feeling of being sick and tired of being 'sick and tired.' All it had taken was admitting over the phone to another human being that I had a problem . . . I was sick, damn it, and I needed help!

I did a lot of praying. It was something foreign to me. I had always been the guy who could make it on his own . . . without any help from anything or anybody! I had watched my mother . . . degraded . . . pitiful . . . drowning in her own sea of alcohol. That would *never* happen to me! But there I was suddenly . . . that fateful day . . . I was a derelict! I suddenly gave up the fight. I was too tired and too weak to battle the demon anymore. And I prayed . . . and finally slept.

I know now that God heard my prayers . . . and more importantly . . . God recognized my surrender . . . at last . . . at long last I had admitted that I couldn't do it alone. I awoke without the 'shakes' and with no urge for a drink. When I finally returned to work at the Fellowship Offices, I found love and support and understanding. People did care!

That, as I said, was a year ago. I can't say that it's all been sugar and cream. But nobody ever said it would be easy. There have been times when I would have, in reverse, given my soul for a drink. But always that nagging little voice saying, "You're going to die" I haven't gotten rich yet. The heavens didn't open and spill blessings down upon me in

profusion. All of my questions haven't been answered and I still have my share of the irritating problems that all humans are heir to. But always I stop and remember . . . remember the way it was, and God, I am grateful! Now I can sit and watch other people get drunk and make fools of themselves and it always reminds me that there, but for the Grace of God, go I.

Way back then, a year seemed like an eternity. I was sure I would never make it. But living it one day at a time . . . each one for its own worth . . . it passed and now it feels like only yesterday that I began my journey back into the world of the living. It went by in the wink of an eye. Would that my brothers and sisters who are suffering would make the same trip. Surveys have shown that one out of three gay men and lesbians will have a problem with alcohol. That's a lot of people. That's a lot of suffering.

I am an alcoholic. And I have a compulsive personality. I'm compulsive about everything in my life and I have to constantly be aware of it. But right now I couldn't be happier for any fact than I am about that. Because now I'm becoming compulsive about my sobriety. The more I get the more I want . . . and the more I want the more I get. It's become a marvelous circle! I would not hesitate to wish that situation upon all of you who have a problem. How to start? Reach out . . . reach out and pray. Help is there if you want it badly enough . . . if you're willing to let go of the hurt for just an instant. Try it. You'll like it!

REFLECTIONS is a column of inspirational and devotional thought, based on Scripture passages, personal observations or experiences. Contributions from readers are encouraged, and must be signed to be published. Articles will be edited to conform to the Editorial Policy when necessary. When possible, the manuscript should be typewritten and double-spaced, and "REFLECTIONS" should be written at the top of the first page. Manuscripts can be returned only when accompanied with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Journey to Israel

First Gay Christian Tour of Holy Land.

REVEREND ELDER JERI ANN HARVEY



Author Harvey and camel enjoying a ride during Holy Land tour.

We had finally arrived in New York – the first Gay Christian Tour of the Holy Lands. We had come from all parts of the country to gather in New York for our flight on El Al Airline to Tel Aviv, Israel. Those of us who came from the west coast of the United States had difficulty since our luggage was lost for about three hours. When it was found, we had to go through the first of what were to be many searches of all personal effects. The questions repeatedly asked of us at the airports, at every checkpoint in Israel and at every holy site were, “Is this packed the same way you packed it this morning? Has anything been moved? Is anything additional in here that you know you didn’t put in here yourself? Has anyone offered you a gift to take home because they appreciate you? Has anyone asked you to take a gift to someone in the United States? Have you let your camera case, purse or attache case out of your sight for longer than one minute?”

After being asked the same questions repeatedly, we asked why. The reply was: “Because, if anyone asks you to take anything, it is very likely to be a bomb, since they know you will be visiting the holy sites in this country and some terrorists would like to destroy those sites to create another situation in Israel. They would not mind blowing up an American while blowing up the holy site as well.” We realized that we were indeed embarking on an adventure!

Our first cultural shock was discovering that every meal we were served was Kosher, and though not bad it was different from what most of us had ever eaten. We also discovered that Israeli air travel is considerably different, since when you are

served meals, that’s it! If you want a drink or anything else, you don’t ring for the flight attendant, you get up and walk to the attendant and ask for whatever you need. There is little catering to the needs of the passengers.

On board there were American Jews going to Israel and, of course, Israeli Jews going back home, and they chose the back of the plane (where some of us were sitting) to drink from their own bottles and celebrate and sing Israeli songs – all night long! There was also a very bitter argument between the Israeli Jews and the American Jews. The Israeli Jews were saying they were sick of the American Jews coming once a year and simply sending their money and why didn’t they just come home where they were needed to fight the war and be true Israelis? An interesting experience!

In the morning, when fisticuffs seemed about to break out, a call to prayer was made; all the orthodox Jews on board came to the rear of the plane, put on their prayer shawls and all else that goes with Orthodoxy, and bowed toward the east in their prayers. This was the first of many prayers said during our flight before we arrived in Tel Aviv.

It was shocking to realize that we were really on this adventure – by virtue of the fact that all the announcements during the flight were made first in Hebrew and then in Arabic and lastly in English. It made us a little nervous that for any emergency instructions, we were going to be the last to know what to do.

We arrived in Tel Aviv and were met by a charming young man named Alex, who promptly gave us all ridiculous red and white beanies to wear so we would not

be lost in the crowd. What a sight: the Moderator of the Fellowship wearing a little red and white hat (that looked like a dunce’s cap!) and pulling his luggage behind him! He looked like a giant child pulling a rubber ducky. Even though we were all suffering from jet lag and fatigue, we were caught up in the excitement of having finally arrived.

We were promptly put into an air-conditioned Mercedes bus and introduced to our driver, Edward. We then left Tel Aviv for the drive to the ancient Holy City of Jerusalem. The highway we traveled had been built expressly for the visit of Anwar Sadat on his epic trip to Jerusalem following the Camp David accords. It is a lovely highway and it took us directly to Jerusalem; David Ben Gurion once said that “Israel without Jerusalem is like a person without a heart.”

As we traveled, we saw overturned convoy trucks left in place beside the road from the Six Day War, as a memorial that this had been the hardest place to take and to keep. It is surrounded by the Judean Hills and suddenly we heard Alex say to us, “These are the plains of the Philistines, and it is here that King David slew the giant.” Tears began to well up for us, the first of many to be shed on this beautiful and awesome trip. We then realized that we were really here, in Israel!

We arrived in Jerusalem and were put into our hotel. Our guide told us that the entire city is constructed of “Jerusalem Stone.” No building may be built there unless it is made from Jerusalem Stone. Builders only have a choice of making it a smooth stone or leaving it a rough, ruggedly cut stone. He told us that, no matter

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where we were in the city, to turn toward the city and away from the Dome at sunset and we would see why it is called "The Golden City." Every day at sunset the Jerusalem Stone reflects golden and the entire city really looks like it is made of gold.

We had a very good dinner that night; again everything was Kosher. It is against the law, we were told, for any public restaurant to serve anything other than Kosher food. Even though less than twenty percent of the people in Israel are religious, the religious group is the most powerful group, and consequently any laws passed in the State of Israel must also pass the religious laws. The next morning we were to visit the Garden of Gethsemane, the Upper Room, the Church of the Nativity, Rachael's Tomb, the Garden Tomb, the Dome of the Rock and the Wailing Wall.

There were some parts of Jerusalem that were as commercial as Tijuana, Mexico, and there were vendors everywhere crying out "One dollar; One dollar!" It seemed that a dollar was everyone's price. Each

place we visited seemed so small to us in comparison with what we had imagined all our lives from the things we had read in the Bible. Everything seemed small except the Wailing Wall. Here, huge Herodian Stones surround one side of what had once been the Temple. These stones now hold millions of bits of paper where prayers have been scrawled and put in the cracks by people who touch the wall and cry out to God.

At the Church of the Nativity, the stable is actually a cave carved into a rock wall, with the church built above it. Perhaps one of our biggest disappointments was that all the sites we had anticipated seeing, including Calvary ("the skull"), do not exist today as they were in the time of our Lord. Because they immediately became Holy Sites, churches were built over each of them, and therefore we lost a lot of the feeling for them with which we had come.

But as this small group of gay Christians went to the *Via Dolorosa* to walk its steps (even though we knew the steps our Lord had walked were twenty to thirty feet beneath the ground on which we walked), we felt the power of Christ's presence: it was so strong that, as we

began the slight incline, walking along the same areas where our Lord had walked, some of us found it difficult to breathe, and we had to stop for a few moments. We were stunned, after pausing momentarily in that place, when we looked up and saw a plaque that stated: "This is the first site where Jesus Christ stumbled with the cross."

We were overwhelmed to walk into the church and see the altar that stands on the site where the cross had once stood for us; to see the magnificent paintings in the background, portraying our Lord being nailed to that cross that was placed in the earth immediately beneath the floor of that church; and to experience the feeling that someone could love us that much! The power of God was overwhelming in that place, and truly we knew that it is Holy.

We walked past a large marble stone that still has the unction oils suspended above it in silver casks and were told by the guide that this is *the* stone, not "perhaps the stone," not "maybe the stone," but this is *the* stone on which the body of our Lord was laid and hastily prepared for burial. We were permitted to lean down and touch it. There are no words to convey the feelings that went through us. We continued on; it was a hurried tour and we wanted to linger in some of these places, but there was so much else to see and to do that we had to leave this very special place in order to do it all.

From there we went to the place called "Gordon's Calvary." It is an extremely commercial place, run by Fundamentalists from England who had purchased it prior to Israel becoming a state, and who have been permitted to remain there because it is considered a Holy Site, and to operate it as a tourist attraction/Holy Site. They were very careful to say, "We believe this is the actual tomb of Jesus," or "We believe this is the actual place that this or that happened." But we found it very difficult to believe that this could have been the place because, as our Jewish guide told us, it was outside the walls of the ancient city and it is very unlikely that Jesus would have been buried there. We were also very surprised that this area is surrounded by very high walls in which are embedded huge jagged pieces of glass. When we asked the attendants about the glass, they said, "We can't have these Moslems seeking refuge in here and causing damage to our property."

We happened to be touring Gordon's Calvary at the same time as a group from

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The constant stream of devout Jews and Christians praying at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.





Rev. Elders Harvey and Perry lead the first MCC Communion Service in the Holy Land.

Bob Jones University, and some of them were quite fascinated with our tour group. When asked who we were, we very proudly stated exactly who we are. We were also delighted to tell them that a previous Dean of Bob Jones University was traveling with us and was a member of our denomination. Needless to say, they hurried back to their group!

It was on this spot (which may or may not be unfortunate) that we held the very first MCC service ever performed in the Holy Land, with the Rev. Elder Troy Perry and the Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey leading our Communion Service. With small communion cups made of hand-carved olive wood which our Jewish guide had purchased for all of us, the consecration was made, the prayers were given, and the body and blood of Christ was celebrated and consumed in the Holy City. It was for many of us a very meaningful service: we were awed that this had been the site of Christ's burial. We remembered Christ's words to pray for our enemies and we did so in this garden, realizing that we were surrounded by those enemies.

We next visited the Tomb of Rachael, that is now reputed to have great healing powers, and we watched as the people went about their religious ceremony of wrapping twine around the Tomb seven times and then taking that rolled-up twine to someone who is very ill. It is given to them in the belief that by simply holding the ball of twine, they will be healed. This

is a site much revered and loved by the Jews in Jerusalem. It had been closed to them until the Holy War, when Jerusalem finally became an undivided city and the Jews had access to all their Holy Sites again.

We returned to our hotel after a very warm and tiring day, all of us filled with the wonders of the day. The following morning, our bus took us south of the City of Jerusalem, where we saw Masada and the Dead Sea. We heard the story of Herod's fortress and the siege of Masada. We were told of the gallant 963 people who remained behind, who were zealots, and who defied the laws of Rome and preferred death over becoming slaves to Rome and its pagan religions. Masada was a very beautiful place. (American television networks will be doing a special on Masada the first week in April, and we encourage everyone to see it, as the story of this magnificent fortress and the bravery of those religious zealots is one to which we feel our community can especially relate.)

We came down from the top of Masada, which is over 1000 feet high, and found ourselves where Sodom and Gomorrah reputedly existed. We were now at one end of the Dead Sea and we continued our journey until we arrived on the resort side. Upon disembarking from our airconditioned bus, we were again questioned by soldiers. The Dead Sea area is a delightful place! Many of us went into the water, but it is so full of salt and bromides and pottash that

we couldn't actually swim in it: we could only float. Its biggest attraction is that its waters are reputed to have medicinal powers, which will cure everything from impotence to "female problems!"

We left the Dead Sea and continued on our journey, stopping at the Good Samaritan Inn, where we were greeted by some delightful Arab men — who wanted to play drums for us and to get us all to dance. One thing that amazed and bemused us was that these Arab men had absolutely no problem giving their attentions to either a male or a female. So, when one of the women in our group would not dance with them, they simply turned to one of the men instead. Most of us enjoyed the dance. (It seemed that one member of our party in particular was a hit with most of the Arab men; Arab men have a strong desire for very large women.) We finally got back into our bus, with our Arab hosts blowing kisses to all of us.

We next visited the Tomb of Lazarus and the sycamore tree Zacchaeus was in when Jesus called him down and asked to go to his home. We went to Qumran to see where the Dead Sea Scrolls had been discovered. It was a very hot day, and we were grateful for our airconditioned bus. We passed by the site of Jericho, which is only rubble today, and we saw the new Jericho to one side, which is in a very fertile valley that is being cultivated by Arab refugees who have chosen to stay there rather than return to Jordan, because they feel that their life in Israel is better than anything they could have back home.

We were surprised at a number of the different carvings we saw in the ruins on our trip. The swastika was carved in many areas we passed, as was the Star of David. Our Jewish guide educated us: the swastika is a pagan symbol for light; likewise, the Star of David is a pagan symbol for fertility. The top of the star is the female, the bottom part is the male, and the coming together of the two parts is the act of fertility. The star was chosen by Nazi Germany to identify the Jews; it was not a symbol the Jews had used prior to that time. It was chosen as the symbol of their new state because they had hated it so much during the Holocaust. Since they had come out victorious and the Nazis themselves had been destroyed, they chose it as a symbol of victory. So it is now a part of their national flag, with the prayer shawl.

We returned to our hotel for a good night's sleep, and the following day we went to the Mount of Olives. This is the

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holy burial place, just outside the walls of the city. For an Orthodox Jew, one must be buried there to be part of the Resurrection. This is one of the main reasons the Jews would not accept Jesus Christ: since the Jews who were buried there did not resurrect when the Messiah came, as the Torah said they would. They disclaim the fact that *some* of the Patriarchs and saints did resurrect at that time. They say this is immaterial. They feel that if Christ had been the true Messiah, *all* the dead would have been resurrected. As Christians, we know that resurrection time is yet to come and we look forward to it.

Being there, in that place, that day, we got an idea of what the city was like when Christ entered on Palm Sunday. Just on

the other side of this hill is Bethany, the place where he sent for the donkey and rode over the hill in triumph into the city of Jerusalem.

This is also believed to be the place where the Lord ascended. We saw the small Church of the Ascension. It is a small domed area in which there is a large stone with the imprint of a foot. It has been revered for centuries as the footprint of Jesus Christ who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in ascending left one footprint imbedded in stone forever. We were permitted to light candles and to touch the stone, and once again the thrill and the feeling that went through us was indescribable!

We took our entire tour group along the whole of the *Via Dolorosa*. We went to the Upper Room and stood there knowing that it is not the same room but a re-

construction made to look just as it would have in our Lord's time. We left that place and then took the long walk on the *Via Dolorosa* described earlier.

We also walked into the different churches that are in areas important to Christians and in the life of our Lord. We stood in the room where Jesus was whipped; we stood in the room where his clothes were taken from him and the soldiers played games on the floor to see who would get the cloak. Those games are still carved into the floor and this is the actual room in which it took place. We were stunned with a feeling of humiliation like our Lord must have felt in that room ridiculed in front of the crowd, whipped and stripped of his clothes. We felt Christ's agony in falling under the weight of the cross; we felt it, and again, that overwhelming question came to us: how could anyone have loved us so much? The church in which we stood was built by Constantine 1600 years ago. It is being carefully restored and it is revered by Christians, Moslems and Jews alike.

We visited the Pool of Bethesda and the Dead Sea Scroll Museum and the Holocaust museum. It was overwhelming to walk into the room where the Dead Sea Scrolls are now very carefully encased. We saw before us the entire book of Isaiah, over two thousand years old, in bits and pieces, and yet not one word has changed! It remains the same today as when written. As we stood at the Pool of Bethesda, our guide Alex told us that the steps on which we were standing were steps that our Lord Jesus had to have stood on when he came to the Pool, as written in our New Testament. Again, a feeling of awe came over us.

The Holocaust Museum reminded us of our loss in that inhumane time in history. We asked ourselves: Is history about to repeat itself? (We had received the news of the American election and most of us were devastated. The women on this trip – the four of us – particularly felt the impact of the election, feeling that the Equal Rights Amendment was dead and that the possibilities of its ratification were now over.) All of us struggled through that day, trying to say that it would be okay and knowing that we have a loving God who will see to our needs now, as at any time when we have called upon God.

Still feeling empty, we were taken by our guide into a church – probably the least garish and ornate of all we had entered – and were told that it was the

continued on page 18

The Church of the Ascension, which houses the footprint-imprinted rock from which Jesus is thought to have ascended.



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Church of St. Anne, the mother of Mary. As we sat in this small church, our guide said to us, "This is a place where it is appropriate to sing hymns if you would like to." And so we did. One of us began to sing a song that had a great meaning for her as a woman and great meaning for us all as Christians:

*Mary, how did you feel that morning,
How did you feel that morning when
you heard him call your name?*

*Mary, how did you feel that morning,
How did you feel that morning when
you heard him call your name?*

*Good News! Unbelievable news!
Hey Peter, James and John,
He's not in the grave,
He's up and risen and gone!"*

As each voice that knew at least some of the words joined in, it became a swelling crescendo and at the end of the three verses, this small church seemed filled with the voices of 18 Christians and 1000 angels! Every heart was uplifted and we all knew that, no matter what lay ahead for MCC, we do have a loving, caring God who would take care of our needs.

After a good night's rest, we left the beautiful city of Jerusalem and began our trip through the rest of the countryside of Israel. The first place that we stopped was Jacob's Well in Samaria and it was beautiful. We walked into a small, little hut and down a long, long stairs into a very small room in which there was simply the well. As we stood around the well, we read from the Scriptures about the woman at the well. At this time, the Rev. Elder Perry lowered the bucket into the well. As it fell, fell, fell we became concerned that the well was dry because we didn't hear the bucket hit the water. But as he brought the waterbucket back up, having reached the end of the rope, it became quite heavy and we realized that the bucket was full. Each of us took a drink from Jacob's Well that day. As our guide said to us, "This is the very well of Jacob, this is the well at which your Lord stood and talked to the woman from Samaria. There is no other well, this is Jacob's Well." Again, our tears began to flow.

We continued through Samaria, going to Seecum, to Nazareth, to Mary's Well, to the Mount of the Beatitudes, to Capernaum and then to the Jordan River. All these places held special meaning for each of us, touching us in many different ways.

We saw the country where Joseph's brothers threw him into the hole to kill him because of his prophetic dream. It is lush; alongside all this beauty, we also saw the many modern ruins from the Six Day War. Bullet holes were everywhere; roofs of houses had gun portholes on top of them; some of the roofs of the houses had been blown away; the soldiers who stood at bus stops -- always with their carbines by their sides -- were all a constant reminder that we were in a country that knows what fighting for freedom is all about.

We went through an area where we saw the south hills green and lush and the north hills barren and brown, and we remembered the Scripture: "the blessed and the cursed hills." We arrived at a spot that is elevated enough that when we stood on top of it, we could see in all directions, and beneath was one of the most lush and beautiful areas we had ever seen. Our guide stood with us and told us, "This is *Meggidon*. But since we call it *Ahmeggidon*, I welcome you Christians to your *Armeggidon*." The chills that went through us are indescribable! We looked around and realized that in every direction, it is the land that will possibly cause World War III. We realized that everywhere along this trip, we had been surrounded by the enemies of Israel.

We got back into our bus and continued our drive, stopping in several places: at a kibbutz for lunch, and in other places to look at assorted goods that we were to buy as souvenirs. While shopping, we asked our guide why the date in Israel was written as November 6, 1980 *B.C.E.* He told us that in Israel that means "before common error"; since they do not accept Christ, they do not accept it as a part of their calendar.

We went through the area where the roofs of the churches were painted red in honor and memory of our Lord's miracle of turning the water into wine at the wedding. Finally, we came to an area that our guide said was the Church of the Mount of Beatitudes. He took us to where he thought our Lord probably stood to give the Sermon on the Mount. We stood at the foot of a mountain that was the most perfect amphitheater imaginable. We could "see" the Lord Jesus standing at the foot of this with all the multitudes covering the mountainside, listening to every word. As we stood there reading from the Sermon on the Mount, the words echoed and reechoed throughout the area. As we were preparing to leave, we noticed a small Arab boy who had been sitting there -- not wanting to sell anything, not pestering us

as so many of the children throughout the trip had done. He simply sat and listened to what we had to say and smiled at us as we turned and walked away toward our bus. Some of us turned around to speak to the boy, but he had disappeared. There was no place for him to have gone, and yet he was no longer there!

We continued on our journey to the River Jordan. Though some of us were amazed at how very narrow and small the river actually was, there was a sense of beauty and lushness and peace that was indescribable. We all got off the bus, and those of us wishing to be baptized rolled up our pant legs and walked into the River Jordan. Here the Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey baptized the Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, and Rev. Perry in turn baptized Rev. Harvey. They in turn baptized those of the group who wished to come forward for it. It was a beautiful time. It was a time of many blessings. It was a time of many reflections. The water of the River Jordan was so clear that we could see the small *St. Peter's Fish* that swim in it, and we could see the bottom of the river no matter where we were.

We went from the River Jordan to our hotel in Tiberius. After dinner that night, we had a long meeting with our tour guide Alex, who brought us up to date on many of the interesting features of life in Israel. Such things as the \$300 fee to have your name placed on a seven-year waiting list for your own telephone. A country where gasoline is \$4.25 a gallon. A country where 65% of every dollar that is earned goes into taxes and where 65% of the national budget goes to military defense.

As we sat enjoying a cool breeze blowing off the beautiful Sea of Galilee, wrapped in its surrounding peace and tranquility, our guide informed us that directly across the Sea of Galilee, there were artillery guns and missiles aimed directly at us, since we were in a part of the Golan Heights. He reminded us that this was one of the most important sections of Israel and one of the areas that the PLO and Jordan desperately want to reclaim. Consequently, none of us went to bed that night without thinking how fortunate we are to live in a country without that kind of fear. The following morning, as we prepared to get on the boat that would take us across the Sea of Galilee, we were told that the PLO had struck only 20 miles away from our hotel during the night, killing 8 people, including one small child.

On the boat crossing the Sea of

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Galilee, our guide said it was still not unusual for tremendous storms to come up in the middle of this lake in the middle of the afternoon. On the boat, we were joined by a large group of black brothers and sisters from a New York church. They were coming from Rome and going to Jerusalem, and so we shared some of the stories of what we had felt in Jerusalem, and they shared with us what we could expect as we continued our trip to Rome. It was a great time of sharing. We sang many Gospel songs together and that small boat rocked across the Sea of Galilee in praise unto the Lord.

We arrived at the shoreline of Capernaum, where most of the miracles during our Lord's ministry were performed. As we walked around, looking at the house of Peter, where his mother-in-law had first been healed by our Lord, and then through the many ruins of that great city, we remembered that this was the second hometown of our Lord Jesus Christ. We recalled how much Jesus had loved it and how much of Jesus' ministry had been performed here. We also remembered the Lord's words that if they did not repent they would be destroyed, as we stood in the ruins of what was once one of the greatest cities of Judea. We saw the ruins of Herod's palace. It seemed that everywhere we had been, there had been a palace built by Herod! The man obviously liked having very opulent places in which to hide when his paranoia struck and he feared assassination, which was often. No matter, everything he had possessed now lay in ruins in this city.

We traveled by bus into the Golan center and among us we planted 18 new trees. Our guide Alex planted the 18th tree, because the 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet is *Chiam*, which means "life," and Alex said that he wanted there to be gay life and a gay forest in Israel. We left looking back at our 18 small cypress trees and feeling good that we could come back at anytime and see their growth. We had each been given a certificate and a small pin. On the certificate was written the exact location where our trees were planted so that anytime we wanted to come back and check on their growth we could. We all prayed over the trees before leaving, and praised God that we could do this together.

Leaving the Golan, we were asked how we liked the new, modern divided highway on which we were traveling. It was the first of its kind that we had encountered,



The tour group at their guide's home on the eve of departure from Israel.

and we were very pleased with it, and also very amazed to find that the reason for this two-lane highway was not civilian transportation, but to speed the transportation of war. The far right lane was for the slower-moving tanks and the left lane for the faster troop trucks. Everything in this country revolved around the ability to defend its freedom.

We lunched at the ruins of Caesarea, by the beautiful blue Mediterranean Sea. It was very, very important in the time between the Old and New Testaments. Roman ruins are everywhere, and ruins of the Crusaders abounded around us. Cornelius was stationed there when he was told by God to go to Joppa to get Peter. As we left this area and continued our journey, we went through Haifa, Mt. Carmel and other very modern cities that have since sprung up in Israel. Some, which did not exist 50 years ago, are now thriving metropolises.

We arrived in Joppa and saw a church that is built over the house where Peter had climbed to the roof to pray and God had caused the sheet to drop from Heaven as he prayed on the roof and told Peter to minister to the Gentiles. This is also the place where Jonah was told that he must leave to go to Ninevah; he refused and instead caught a ship going in the opposite direction, to Tarshish. We traveled south from Joppa and arrived in modern Tel Aviv, which was mere sand dunes 70 years ago. It is the most western and modern city in Israel and our hotel was on the ocean front of the Mediterranean. It is a gorgeous place!

We had been many places and we had met many people. We were delighted that God was so good to give us a gay brother as a guide. He was the only gay guide in all of Israel, and he was equally thrilled to have us gay men and lesbians touring his country, the first time in his 8 years as a guide. We had become "family." We had become family enough that at the end of our day, before going to our hotel, our guide stopped in front of a small house in Nantanya and said to all of us, "Welcome home, my brothers and sisters." He then insisted on taking us into his own home to share fresh orange juice before going to the hotel. It was a sad time, because our time in Israel was at a close. We were leaving the following morning for Rome.

There were places we had seen and feelings we had felt that would affect us all for the rest of our lives. Through it all, for most of us I think, our overwhelming feeling was a sense of gratitude to God that Jesus came and died and rose again for us. We hope you have been able to share our trip in Israel through this article. We don't want anyone to feel that our time in Rome was any less exciting, for those of us who went, but it is the Holy City and the Holy Land that we most wanted to share with you. If we were to write you of all the many wonderful things we saw and heard and did, it would take an entire issue of IN UNITY.

GOD BLESS!

A DAY'S PAY for A DAY'S WORK?

PAYING THE MINISTER

REVEREND DUSTY PRUITT
Contributing Editor

A minister's pay is a ticklish subject, particularly when the question of the church's responsibility is involved. Most pastors feel that it is inappropriate to even discuss salary, much less to ask for a raise, even when they genuinely need one. Therefore, it is usually the members of a church's board who are responsible for insuring that the pastor's salary is fair and in line with the standard of living in the congregation.

Many times church members find it difficult to decide how much a minister should be paid. Often, there is a lack of understanding of the true state of the pastor's finances and of the disparity between the pastor's salary and the pastor's needs. The figures in the accompanying chart, derived from questionnaires returned by MCC ministers and compared with other figures, should provide some clues as to the true state of many pastors' salaries.

According to the Rev. Jim Dykes, Chairperson of the UFMCC Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee, a church "should be striving to pay its senior minister a *minimum* of \$10,000 per year. Staff ministers should earn *at least* 75% of what a senior minister is paid. Part-time ministers (i.e., in terms of hours, not salary) should earn *at least* \$5.00 per hour. Ideally, because we as churches are in

the people-serving business, 40-50% of the budget should be budgetted for church salaries. Only people can serve people!"

One of the reasons for the above recommendations is that most ministers will log an average of 55-65 hours in a week, whether the congregation is 30 or 300 people. If the congregation is unusually demanding or manipulative, a minister can easily work 80 hours a week. A minister earning a \$12-15,000 annual salary is only being paid about \$4.20-5.25 per hour for 55 hours, and only \$3.50-4.40 per hour for 65 hours per week.

When contacted about this subject, and presented with the figures cited above, a member of the Board of Elders stated, "This is a tragedy! We have to move from this. To have almost 50% of our ministers living below poverty level is a disgrace to the UFMCC. That is why the Board of Elders continues to be concerned about ministerial pay, and why our churches must, *by faith*, start raising the pay of the ministers in our Fellowship."

Ministers feel a calling to their work, and a dedication to their Lord, but there are negative physical and psychological consequences to high hours and low pay. Ministers may feel frustrated or resentful if they feel their genuine calling is being taken advantage of. Real necessities may be lacking, such as good health care, dental

	AVERAGE SALARY	% OVER \$15,000	% UNDER \$6,000	% \$6,000 to \$15,000	% MOON- LIGHTING
MINISTERS -ALL DENOMINATIONS (except MCC)	\$10,348	under 5%	14%	over 80%	over 20%
MCC MINISTERS	\$ 6,909	5.2%	45.5%*	49.2%	22%
Truck Drivers	\$18,300				
Electricians	\$18,000				
Lawyers	\$25,000				
Dentists	\$40,000				
Doctors	\$100,000- 225,000				

* Includes 11.6% of MCC ministers who received no salary.

SOURCES:
Figures for non-MCC ministers from Christianity Today, 7/18/80, p. 12.
Figures for MCC ministers from UFMCC office, based on reports from 51.3% of MCC churches, 1980.
Other figures from U.S. Labor Department, as cited in Christianity Today, 7/18/80.

COMMENTS ON THE STATISTICS: Included in the 45.5% of MCC ministers who earn under \$6,000 (Col. 3), are 9 ministers (11.7%) who earn nothing. These are Worship Coordinators of Study Groups. But even with that factor removed, 33.8% of the reporting MCC ministers earn under \$6,000 per year. Another fact that can be extrapolated from the data is that with "only" 22% of MCC ministers moonlighting at other jobs, a large number of those earning under \$6,000 must be either independently wealthy (?) or barely eking out an existence.

care, proper diet, and proper rest and sleep. The upshot of all this may be a serious illness or psychological problems. In any event, the result is a minister who is not doing the best job possible.

The group — church, mission or study group — has a responsibility to see to it that the minister is properly paid. And, conversely, the minister has a responsibility to see to it that s/he does not drain the congregation dry. There are several factors which can facilitate this process.

ATTITUDE. A church that acts “miserly” with the pastor will soon find itself reaping a harvest of need from the seeds it has sown. The pastor who looks at the congregation like a labor union looks at management, will soon find the atmosphere of mutual resentment less than congenial to ministry.

THEOLOGY. Tithing should be taught, but not as a “debt” one owes to God. The positive aspects should be stressed — the blessings — material as well as spiritual. Church members should not be giving out of guilt, or even from obligation, but out of the joy of giving to support God’s work in this world.

STYLE. Much depends on the style of the pastor. An authoritarian attitude may have its place in some aspects of the ministry, but not in the area of money. It is better to be a *facilitator* when teaching giving.

EXAMPLE. A pastor who does not set the example of giving will not see the congregation giving. The pastor should never leave himself or herself open to charges of not giving *at least* the same percentage of income that s/he expects the members to give.

It is clear from the statistics in the chart that MCC members need to learn better stewardship toward their pastors and church staffs. Education and attitudes must be improved from those held in former church backgrounds. Many parishioners come from backgrounds in which the local church was heavily endowed. Churches in the UFMCC are not, and consequently they need proportionately more support from their members. More support means more resources available, and can mean better stewardship toward the pastor. The opportunities for growth are limited only by the dedication and vision of the people of our churches. •

A west coast Pastor: *“I sometimes feel a dollar value is put on me and because I’m not paid very much I’m not worth very much -- FRUSTRATING! I certainly don’t have either time or money for dating, and consequently I don’t. I don’t date from within the congregation. I receive \$50 per week, and believe me it’s hard for a single minister. The group provides my housing, but try buying gasoline, food and utilities on \$50 per week! It’s difficult -- and lonely -- but the spiritual rewards keep me at it.”*

A northwestern Worship Coordinator: *“Most groups just starting feel they can’t afford anything. Mine wasn’t any different. But I asked for \$200 a month. They didn’t think they could afford it. Now it’s more than double that. They’ve never failed to meet it. My lover was working, but I asked for the money anyway -- I felt it was a matter of education. Time-wise, though, I don’t have a day off. But the calling is wonderful! I have a good group. This is a good experience, especially for new ministers. You can build from the ground up.”*

A southwestern Pastor: *“I couldn’t deal with the demands made on my time after working 40 hours a week at a secular job. The church fired me for being “unstable” after I lost three lovers. But the real truth was that I was spending another 35-40 hours per week with church administration and counseling. The demands were that great and the giving was low. I feel like a real failure.”*

A midwestern Worship Coordinator: *“I realized coming into a Study Group would be a low salary. The frustration is that there seems to be no appreciation of the work that is done, even though the salary is low. My time ballooned before I realized I’d let it -- but I recently cut back and I haven’t heard much reaction, either positive or negative. There is some frustration on the part of my lover. She knew that salaries weren’t going to be that great when we moved. The church buys my insurance, but we still have problems meeting bills, even with my lover working. When necessities come up, we ‘rob Peter to pay Paul.’ There is no money for the nice little things we’d like to have. I have found that my efforts to teach tithing -- of time, talents and money -- meet with resistance. Even in a group of 25-30 people, if every member gave even 5%, we’d have no problems.”*

A desert-southwest Worship Coordinator: *“I pastor a good group. But they ran me into the ground -- I was a catchall for all the complaints; I was supposed to satisfy their every need, like a mother! I got sick, and finally got a pay raise -- to \$7,000 a year. They panicked and they learned from it. They are learning that ‘ministry’ means laity too -- or else the minister goes down! If it weren’t for my spouse, I would have starved a long time ago. If anything happened to my spouse, I’d have to go on food stamps. Paul went from place to place preaching, and the congregation felt he did it without money, even though he didn’t (read Philippians 3).”*

Is your Pastor also your lover or spouse? No? Would it make any difference if this were true . . . I mean, would it make any difference to you personally?

In various circumstances or church matters, would you see things a little differently? Would you show more consideration, give more benefit of the doubt or more financial support? Would you be more involved and more willing to help with the million-and-one tasks and projects with which the pastor struggles -- if s/he were someone you *really* loved?

Are you distracted by your pastor's faults? Consider then: if your pastor is not your Christian brother or sister, gifted and called to teach, preach and lead, why did you elect him/her in the first place? If, on the other hand, your pastor *does* have spiritual gifts and a call to the ministry, then quit faulting your pastor's humanity. You would be mighty uncomfortable with a *perfect* pastor, anyway! Concentrate on your responsibilities and let God deal with God's servant. God will!

I hear stories of congregations that use and abuse, chew up and spit out, their pastors regularly; destroying ministers physically and emotionally with their demands and orneriness. Many ministers receive less physical, emotional and spiritual support than we want and expect for ourselves. The pastor's time off is never inviolate: we want her/him constantly at our beck and call -- but also involved in the community, always in the office, always available when anyone calls for help -- day or night. We refuse to sacrifice *our* evenings for church needs, but expect the pastor to counsel and conduct programs and services so the church will grow. Why should the pastor be expected to sacrifice her/his home life, when the congregation doesn't? Paying a salary does not give anyone ownership.

See what I'm getting at? Do you treat your pastor the way you would want *your* loved one treated?

Remember the Golden Rule? "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Decency is basic. We expect decency from others. But we tend to forget that this also applies to our spiritual

leaders. How can we Christians forget such things as common decency when it comes to our pastors? We are probably all a little guilty . . . but things would look and be different if we would just put ourselves in others' shoes and consider how it would be if the pastor were our own loved one.

Sometimes we demand a type of church leadership that we are not willing to follow or support. We say we want leaders and then we resist them and hinder their efforts to lead. We make it impossible for them to develop and maintain strong, well-nurtured personal relationships, and then complain that they are poor role models for the community. In short, we rob our pastors of the considerations we demand for ourselves. Your pastor is called to do a job, not to live up to your personal expectations. Perhaps the reason that some churches may have a difficult time finding pulpit candidates is their reputation for kicking and screaming about everything and being supportive in nothing.

Do you expect your pastor to make all the financial sacrifices? If ten people tithe, the pastor could have a salary equal to the average salary of those ten. Ten more tithers would probably pay the church rent and other expenses. How easy is it for you to live on *your* salary? How many hours do you work for that pay? Can you count on your off hours, evenings, weekends, and days off to be free from work demands? Your pastor can't. Do you expect your pastor to do more in a day than you could? To use the spiritual gifts s/he has been given more than you use yours? According to the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 4:10), we each have a responsibility to use our gifts to serve others.

Maybe we should rethink our positions, you and I. Perhaps we should regard our pastors as if they *were* our personal loved ones . . . and treat them accordingly. You and your church may grow spiritually -- dramatically. You may even be surprised by how much your pastor improves!

Just think about it . . .

One who knows!

IN UNITY

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DEADLINE FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE REPORTS!

The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Clerk of the Board of Elders, has reminded all Commissions, Committees, Departments, etc., that all reports must be in the Fellowship Office by April 1, 1981 (with the exception of the Elder's Task Force on Inclusive Language). All reports not received by April 1st will not be printed and made available for action on the floor of General Conference.

VOLUNTEER INTERPRETERS

for the

HEARING - IMPAIRED

needed for

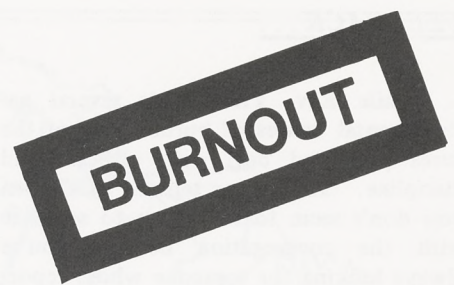
GENERAL CONFERENCE X

August 3 - 9, 1981
Houston, Texas

Send inquiry, with qualifications, to:

Cliff Floeck
MCCR
1919 Decatur Street
Houston, TX 77007

feedback on...



I wish to make my comment concerning this most recent issue of IN UNITY.

To put it lightly, I was disgusted to see a front cover on my official periodical that flashed *B-U-R-N-O-U-T* to the world as our comment on the state of our belief and church. BURNOUT by whom and about what? I am a very firm believer that the only way the children of God become burnt out is when they forget about the Blood of Jesus Christ and become so self-centered they lose sight of the wonderful gift God has given to each of us and try to rely upon themselves.

The really frightening thing to note is that we have allowed ourselves as a Church to fall into this trap set by Satan. We have allowed our gayness to overcome our Christianity. Instead of going out and preaching and teaching and telling others about God, we spend our time in fighting among ourselves. Instead of accepting our salvation given to us so freely, we doubt the very real presence of God working in our lives. We can find a thousand and one excuses to doubt the Holy Trinity, and thus block any possible action of the Holy Spirit from acting through us and in us. We as clergy expect God to keep faith with us when we fail to keep faith with God. Instead of going out and selling cookies to raise funds to spread the word in New Zealand, we spend countless hours fighting among ourselves. Instead of having a cover on IN UNITY which proclaims the love and salvation of Jesus Christ we feature instead the words BURNOUT!!

I thank God that Troy Perry finally spoke out in strong and direct language in his letter which accompanied each issue. I feel very deeply concerning the role that IN UNITY *M-U-S-T* play in the life of my church, OUR church. For too long IN UNITY has been allowed to be a force in my church which divided God's people. For too long has it been used as a way to lead people away from the light of God's love. For too long have non-believers and children of darkness been allowed to preach and teach lies in the name of the Fellowship. It took those faithful few to begin the Fellowship many years ago, and it is going to take equal love of God if we as a church are to survive where we are

right now in our short history. But now is the time and the place. Tomorrow will be too late, I fear! If we allow our church to go down the drain now, if we fear to speak out now, if we allow ourselves to be divided and diverted from our appointed task of spreading love and hope and peace, then we are indeed defeated in our task.

I have been to another country. I have seen and heard and experienced people crying for the liberation only God can give to them. I know that God has given us the mission to go and preach and teach all nations in the Name of Jesus Christ. But how can we possibly fulfill this mission when we do not know God ourselves? Before we can go forward, our very foundations must be firm and strong. Possibly what we really need for World Conference in Houston is a basic course in Christianity, and five days of classes in just what UFMCC believes. Somewhere along the way we began to assume that all who said they were Christians were Christians, and now we are beginning to pay the price.

No, I am not calling for witch hunts! No, I am not calling for people to be thrown out of the church! No, I am not calling for IN UNITY or any other organ of the church to become a spiritless piece of junk mail. BUT, I am urging that once more we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. Once more I would love to receive IN UNITY and be glad that it had arrived instead of dreading its presence and wondering what new theological battle it contained. Once more I would like to feel assured that when the members of my church attend another MCC congregation that they would not be told that Jesus Christ really wasn't God or wasn't this or wasn't that, or that God is really some mother goddess, or etc.

I as a clergyperson need to be assured that my church, the Universal Fellowship, is indeed a church where God is worshipped. I need to see this expressed in the materials that reach my desk. I need to find peace and harmony instead of discontent and bickering among the children of God.

Coming as I do from a Lutheran background, I was always taught that to kick butts when necessary was not so bad.

Possibly the time has come in the Universal Fellowship for a reformation. Possibly 1981 must be the year when each of us begins to re-examine just what we believe in, and whom we follow. Do we work to spread the light, or do we cause darkness to cover the earth?

Some will pray to God and find peace. Others will examine and re-examine and find that possibly they will be happier elsewhere. That is o.k. too, and they will depart with my personal blessing. If I can ever be of help for them or to them as they continue in their own individual ministries, I shall. But this is my church, and I love it dearly. This is my Jesus Christ, and you shall no longer do Christ harm nor cause others not to know Christ.

The fight is on, the battle lines drawn. Now let us pray to God for help and strength to do what is necessary if we are to continue.

Rev. David L. Kromer
Co-Worship Coordinator
MCC of the Monterey Peninsula
Monterey, California

Just when I thought it was safe to read IN UNITY again, I delved into an issue I found far more controversial than the one I call "To Loose la Trek": BURNOUT.

As a current sufferer of burnout, I was extremely encouraged by the attempt to bring the phenomenon into the open. I thought the battle was over. The forces that advocated a veil of silence over burnout on the grounds that people wouldn't get sick if you didn't give them the idea, had been defeated. That the underlying attitude of blaming the victim for the disease still remains is more unfortunate than I can say.

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FEEDBACK...

While Rev. Vierra lists several environmental causes of burnout, all of the cures presented deal with self-care and discipline. Jim Jerber tells us that when you don't seem to have time to socialize with the congregation because you're always looking for someone whose report is due, when it's difficult to concentrate on God during worship, when you feel unappreciated, when you're always exhausted and feel trapped, that the answer is to look at your walk with Christ. Did it ever occur to anyone that it may be one's walk with the Church that's at fault?

Rev. Pruitt comes closest to this question by recommending various dosages of withdrawal. Is this to say that the way to deal with a situation that drains you is to find things to distract you so that when it drains you, you won't mind so much? Even more sobering is her suggestion on behalf of the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Subcommittee on Concerns that the burnt-out go somewhere like a Catholic retreat house to get some nurturing. What does that say about our Fellowship as a community of believers, a shelter for troubled souls?

Do you want to know what it's like to be burned out? When you're burned out you lose the ability psychologically (and, as much new evidence indicates, chemically) to think positively. It's gone. Telling someone who's burned out to look on the bright side is like telling a blind person to look where they're going. When you're burned out you're moving through jello most of the time — just enough jello to keep you separated from the people that

love you and not quite enough to protect you from the cavalcade of self-sapping, doubt-producing encounters. The procrastination that Chris Messenger describes isn't the half of it! Eventually you have to swim through so many hundreds of miles of jello just to find your mind, you haven't the strength to flip the decision switch.

Imagine being in that condition and reading that, "The more Christ figures in our support system, the less likely we are to burn out . . ." What can you think but that not only have you lost touch with all the abilities and qualities you wanted to put to use for God's service, you obviously weren't holy enough to hack it in the first place!

Certainly it's true that ministry — professional and lay ministry — can be very hard work and requires personal and spiritual strength as does any hard work. What doesn't seem right to me is that much, much more of that strength ends up being used to fend off the Christians instead of the lions.

Certainly it's true that we are called to minister to ourselves as much as we minister to others. It's also true that it's easier to adapt than it is to change other people . . . the log in your own eye, etc. But I just can't understand why when you come to realize that people treat you like a computerized report-collector, never say they appreciate you, expect you to have Christ in your support system, only call you when they need a favor, when you become painfully aware that your dinner depends on how the Board receives your performance in each service — you're just supposed

to chalk your lack of focus on God up to your own burnout-crippled perception. Which came first, the burnout or the abuse?

If we're going to talk about burnout constructively, we have to stop pretending that the way we run our churches and our Fellowship has nothing to do with it. We have to stop divorcing the burnt-outs crisis of faith from the faithless conditions that bring people to the crisis point.

(Rev.) Lucia A. Chappelle
Los Angeles, California

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New CANADIAN DISTRICTS Formed

Greenway Interview

In response to the question, "How do the ministers and people of the churches in the new Western Canadian District feel about forming two districts?" Rev. Greenway said he felt the churches in the west "were not amused, but felt it was inevitable." He thought that the decision was "not going over well with the west," that Canada is indeed large geographically, but that splitting the one district was "too much." He pointed out that although one reason cited for the split was the cost of travel to District Conferences, that inexpensive flights are available. He stated that while it costs \$450 to fly to Houston, Texas, it only costs \$201 to fly to Toronto. While indicating that there is a nostalgic feeling for the eastern Canadian churches (especially among the ministers, all of whom came from the Toronto church), Greenway said that any problems within Canada which might have led to creating two districts were "caused in the East, not in the western churches."

When asked how he saw the split affecting growth within the district, Rev. Greenway responded, "I do not see it hampering anything, and I do not see it fostering anything." He indicated that he did not see it hurting the new Western Canadian District financially, although he feels that the new Eastern Canadian District may be hurt financially, since he feels that more tithe money has historically come from the western churches than the eastern churches. He indicated that he felt the western churches would continue their outreach and growth at the same pace as in the past.

When asked how he thought the decision would affect the voice of the Canadian churches within the Fellowship at large, Rev. Greenway said he saw no difference at all. He stated, "Nobody listens to us. We are listened to and passed on as usual." He felt that the Elders and the General Conference "listen to the complaints of the Canadian churches, but nothing is done about them." He saw no change in the situation, since there will still be the same number of delegates and

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(BACKGROUND: At its January, 1981, meeting the Board of Elders voted to divide the existing Canadian District into two new districts: a Western Canadian District and an Eastern Canadian District. The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Clerk of the Board of Elders, indicates that this was a step not quickly or lightly taken. She reports that this has been under active consideration by the Elders for at least two years, and had followed several months of seeking input from the Canadian churches. Most of the feedback was in support of the move, with some sentiment against it. Rev. Elder Wilson reports that some expressions of support have been received since the decision was made, and that she has received no negative comments on the decision, as of press time.

Some of the factors influencing the decision of the Elders were the great difficulty and expense for delegates attending District Conferences, and especially for those in the less populated western Provinces of Canada. It was also noted that the existence of two Canadian Districts might allow the Canadian churches a more influential voice in the Fellowship. It has also generally been the case that narrowing the size of a district has helped to stimulate growth and development in that district. The churches in the new Western Canadian District should not feel themselves isolated, since there are 20 churches in the bordering Northwest District in the United States, with 8 churches in the immediately bordering states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

In deciding to create the two new districts, the Board of Elders heeded the request of the Canadian churches to delay the implementation until the next District Conference, which means that at the May 1981 meeting, officers will be elected for both the Western Canadian District and the Eastern Canadian District, and the existing district will be dissolved.

IN UNITY has sought out the views of two Canadian church members for this article. The Rev. LLOYD GREENWAY is pastor of MCC Calgary, Alberta Province, which is in the new Western Canadian District. Mr. GARTH COMBA is a member of the Board of MCC Toronto, Ontario Province, in the new Eastern Canadian District.)

Comba Interview

When asked "How do the ministers and people of the churches in the new Eastern Canadian District feel about forming two districts?" Mr. Comba first cautioned that he was not trying to represent the feelings of all the eastern Canadian churches—that he was most familiar with those of MCC-Toronto, but that he felt they probably accurately reflected the feelings of most people in the other eastern churches. Comba said that he does not see any problem of acceptance within the Eastern District. He feels that one Canadian District "was just too big to handle."

Even though his term on the board of the Toronto church has very recently ended, Comba feels that that board is supportive of the district split based on the cost of annual visits by the District Coordinator (more than \$400), as well as the cost to the Toronto church of sending the pastor and two lay delegates to both of the last two district conferences in western Canada (more than \$1,000 each time). Mr. Comba feels that the decision should promote fellowship among the churches in the smaller districts. He pointed out that "no one is feeling 'good' about the split" in the eastern churches, but that it is "some-

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ministers from Canada to the General Conference. Greenway further indicated that "all this Americanism plays on our nerves, listening to your politicians, racial issues, Equal Rights Amendment, etc.," which are strictly American issues, and do not interest Canadian citizens. He advised in the future "to leave American politics out of an international gathering" such as the General Conference.

Concerning the effect of splitting the district on relations between the western and eastern Canadian churches, Rev. Greenway said that he does not think the two districts will be able to cooperate. He feels "the split will cause deterioration" between the eastern and western churches. Since all the present Canadian clergy's roots are in the Toronto church, he "feels like a part of [his] life is being cut out."

When asked if he saw the decision being accepted within the new Western Canadian District, Greenway replied, "Yes—but no." He said that the board of the Calgary church "was not pleased" and felt very sorry that it had happened. He felt that if people in Canada had been able to "sit down and talk—instead of writing letters back and forth with charges and money talk—this would not have happened." When asked about the division of the existing district treasury between the two new districts, he said he thought it should be done proportionately in favor of the western churches—since he felt that historically more money had come from the western churches. He indicated that this would probably be the case in May, since there are six votes from the western churches and only "2 or 3" from the eastern churches.

Rev. Greenway also expressed concern over the tithes of the Canadian churches being sent to the Fellowship, instead of remaining in Canada. He feels that Canadian money cannot legally cross the border to the United States. He felt that it "should continue to go to MCC of Canada, Inc., unless the UFMCC incorporates in Canada." He also indicated that the Calgary church does not like the fact that there has been no decision by the Elders on the Canadian tithes. He further said that he sees "the Canadian [MCC] Church as needing to be separate from the American Church—since America is pushed at us so much." He thinks that the Canadian churches "will harbor bad feelings" over this. Greenway indicated that the western Canadian

churches want a separate voice from the churches in the United States. In closing, he said he felt that the Elders should "make people sit down and talk" about any bad feelings engendered by the decision.

Comba Interview

thing they agree with from a practical point of view." He feels that the reaction in Toronto is not a very emotional one.

When asked how he saw the decision affecting growth within the new Eastern Canadian District, Comba said that "it should improve growth in the Eastern District, mainly due to closeness." He feels that it "won't adversely affect the Eastern District," and that it should make developing new churches more economical. He pointed out that it could be difficult to fly the District Coordinator from Vancouver to an eastern area, such as Halifax, to lay the groundwork for a new church, but that it would be much less expensive and much easier within a smaller district. He also feels that supervising the growth of a new work in the east from a western city is much more difficult, and that "a new church benefits from geographically closer supervision."

As to the effect on the voice of the Canadian churches within the Fellowship at large, Comba felt the creation of two Canadian districts would increase their voice in the long range. He points out that even though it will not increase the number of delegates to General Conference, there will be two District Coordinators and two lay representatives. He also sees the Canadian churches having two voices in committees (e.g. on the Laity) which operate at the district level.

Mr. Comba feels that the decision to form two districts from the current Canadian District might strain relations between the eastern and western churches "for a few months—I can see the possibility of some bitter feelings temporarily." He feels that the reaction of the western churches is more emotional than that of the eastern churches. In this regard, he pointed out that "an action of the Board of Elders of the UFMCC will not split the country of Canada."

When asked if he saw the decision being accepted in the new Eastern Canadian District, he replied "I think so and I hope so. What happens in the churches regarding the decision depends on the leadership in those churches. If the ministers decide to

oppose it aggressively—there could be problems." He said he was aware of opposition in the western churches, and stated, "I hope the pastors in the west will see that this is the way it will be, that they are part of a Universal Fellowship—international, worldwide."

Regarding the division of the current district treasury, Mr. Comba stated that it depends on the western churches, since they have more delegates in the current district, and can outvote the eastern churches. He felt either an equal or a proportionate division would be acceptable. He went on to say that "the Toronto church is the largest contributor of funds to the current district," that it contributes perhaps one-half of district funds. In regard to transferring tithes to the Fellowship, he stated, "These funds are Fellowship funds. They have been used locally [in the past], when there are Fellowship programs that could be operated on a Canadian basis, using these funds. They are also useable as missions funds—for Europe or elsewhere—under the control of the Board of Elders. The westerners seem to feel that Canadians are losing control of Canadian money. They lose sight of the fact that we are one Fellowship, that districts are only for convenience."

Mr. Comba also expressed his feeling that there are several benefits to the creation of two Canadian districts, in addition to promoting more church growth. One of these is "getting rid of the District corporation It was a redundancy. It only set up a legal framework for a separate MCC in Canada. The Board of Elders is doing what it should have done when the Canadian MCC corporation was set up. I feel the Elders were poorly advised then." Comba feels that there is "strong feeling in the east against a legally separate denomination in Canada. We are one Fellowship." He says the eastern churches "want to be an operating part of the Fellowship. We can't just say we want a voice and benefits, but not allow our dollars to cross the border. Being a part of the Fellowship includes supporting Fellowship programs."

In closing, Mr. Comba said that he feels that "district or national boundaries should not mean that much—we are all Christians. We are a Universal Fellowship. The Church is supra-national. We should not focus only on our district or country. Being part of the Fellowship transcends nationality." He reiterated that "organizational things are only there to facilitate the Church—but they are not the Church itself." ●

UPDATE: CUBAN RELIEF PROGRAM

"My heart cries out, not only for the refugees, but for the pastors, churches, sponsors, and other groups that have given assistance to the gay and lesbian Cuban refugees," states John Chasteen, Director of the Cuban Relief Program for the UFMCC. "I'm excited about receiving the \$30,000 grant from Church World Service, but I know that it can't even begin to repay our people for the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have come out of their own pockets -- not to mention all the time and labor people have given out of their love and concern for other gay men and lesbian women."

The grant of which Mr. Chasteen spoke was awarded to the UFMCC Cuban Relief Program to give a small amount of reimbursement to the churches that have assisted, as well as to help pay for continued staffing and operational costs of the program. The main problem, according to Chasteen, has been that the resettlement agencies have not been passing any funds through to UFMCC for the tremendous job they have been doing. "The main reason that I haven't kept these agencies informed is I simply have not had time to document our efforts. Most of my time has been spent glued to the desk, just trying to keep up with all the pressures and work involved. I finally had to force myself to drop everything, because our financial situation had become so critical. I didn't want to have to shut down the program, so I decided our only answer was to let people know what we were doing.

"This all began a few weeks ago, as the daily pressures became more and more unbearable for me. After about a week of so much mental aggravation and frustration, I began crying to God for help. That weekend, God began to give me a vision for the program. Along with that vision came answers, as this grant from Church World Service proves. Also, the realization of how weak I am and how little I can do -- I believe - gave God the chance to show me God's strength and how much God can do."



John Chasteen (second from right), Director of UFMCC Cuban Relief Project, and Frank Rivera (right), Project Caseworker, confer with Cuban Refugees Francisco and Angel.

As hinted above, this grant doesn't begin to cover the amount of funds needed to continue the program, but it is a welcome start. Mr. Chasteen reports that he has plans to seek further funding for other needs of the program. "I'm not in this for profit or fame," he states, "but the funding is needed primarily to bring more professionalism and organization into the program."

Mr. Chasteen also reports that Rev. Bruce Hughes has gone to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, to assist in the placement of the remaining gay refugees there. Why all this bother to secure funding, when only one camp remains open? Chasteen doesn't see the closing of this last camp as the end of the program. He states: "Emergencies, and assistance and follow-up needs, will continue to arise."

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GENERAL CONFERENCE 10

PREPARING

FOR

HOUSTON

Arrangements are well underway for General Conference X, according to the Rev. Pepper Shields, Conference Coordinator. During a recent interview following his visit to the Shamrock Hilton Hotel in Houston, Rev. Shields stated, "I feel very good about the work accomplished thus far by the General Conference Management Team. Much of the preliminary ground work has been laid and we are anticipating an exciting and worthwhile conference. The assistance of MCC of the Resurrection, which is hosting the conference, and especially of their local coordinator, Mr. Len Shelton, has been invaluable."

The tenth General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches promises to be a time of sharing, renewal and dialog. The Conference Management Team has already spent many hours anticipating the needs and desires of those who will attend. Careful consideration is being given to the results of an intensive survey taken following the 1979 conference in Los Angeles. The Team is attempting to be sensitive to such suggestions as the need for varied worship styles, an awareness that we are an international fellowship, involvement of both laity and clergy, inclusive language, the need to free conference delegates to attend workshops, seminars, and other special events, and the need for social sharing settings. "The Conference Management Team hopes to offer something for everyone," according to Rev. Shields.

Featured Speakers will include Ms. Joan Clark, Director of Ecumenical Women's Centers; Dr. James S. Tinney, professor at Howard University, author, and Editor of *SPIRIT: A Journal of Issues Incident to Black Pentecostalism*; and the Rt. Rev. William G. Black, Episcopal Bishop of Southern Ohio. In addition, the Team is in the process of contacting other well-known speakers as participants. During the Human Rights Rally, to be held on the Saturday afternoon of the conference, the

UFMCC will award its Human Rights Award to the Unitarian Universalist Association for its valuable assistance and support.

Consideration is being given to workshops and seminars which will speak to the varied and vital issues facing the Fellowship. Among the many such workshops being considered are those dealing with cultural awareness, Christian education, Christian social action around the world, the disabled, the church and its library, hymnody and church music programs, gay/lesbian literature, the role of the local board of directors, worship planning, feminists and feminist theology, and the gay/lesbian parent/child relationship. This list is only partial and input is being sought both with regard to facilitators for these suggested workshops and for other useful and important topics. Final determination of workshops/seminars will be made at the regular meeting of the Conference Management Team in April. (Suggestions are encouraged and should be sent to the *CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT TEAM* at the UFMCC general offices in Los Angeles. A description of the workshop/seminar proposal and an outline of the presentation should be included. All proposals must be in the Fellowship offices by April 1.)

In its attempt to be aware of the many various worship styles within the UFMCC, the Team is working closely with the Worship Committee appointed by the Board of Elders. The committee, composed of the Rev. Jeffrey Pulling (Oakland, CA) and Ms. Mary Lou Kerchner (San Jose, CA), has already been of great assistance to the Team in planning for a meaningful, spiritually uplifting, and varied worship program for the conference.

The Committee on Church Hymnody, co-directed by Mr. Jim Mitulski and Mr. Dick Follett, has been authorized to prepare a trial hymnal including 50 hymns for General Conference. Through their recently circulated request, they are currently seeking input and conference musicians. (They may be contacted by writing the *Committee on Church Hymnody* at the UFMCC offices in Los Angeles.)

When asked about conference registration, Rev. Shields replied: "A pre-registration packet is available from the Fellowship offices. In the packet there is a Conference Registration Form, which must be returned to the Fellowship Offices with the \$20 registration fee, payable to the UFMCC in U.S. funds only. There are also hotel registration cards for the Shamrock Hilton, which must be completed and sent directly to the hotel; no deposit need be sent to the hotel in advance, but payment must be made in full upon arrival. The UFMCC will not be responsible for hotel reservations. A list of other hotels in the immediate area will be available in the near future."

In response to the question, "What can conference attendees anticipate from General Conference X?", Rev. Shields replied: "Just as has been true of every past General Conference, and as is true of just about every event anyone attends, people will receive from the conference what they put into it. The Conference Management Team, the Board of Elders, and the many others involved in planning, are doing everything possible to assure a conference that will be worthwhile, efficient, and spiritually uplifting for all. Every effort is being made to provide for meaningful dialog on the various issues we will be discussing in our business meetings. We are trying our best to be sensitive to the needs of each person attending, and we are doing all we can to provide a conference which will be a real reflection of the variety and uniqueness which characterize our Fellowship. We have spent much time praying, working, and anticipating needs. It is hoped that as we meet together each of us will do so recognizing our diversity, our unity, and our aim to glorify God and share our experiences, our joys, and our pains and hopes as we celebrate the work God is doing in our midst."

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches invites *YOU* to be a part of this exciting celebration by joining us for our tenth General Conference, August 3 - 9, 1981, at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel in Houston, Texas. ●

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE TASK FORCE

--A Progress Report

IN UNITY recently interviewed the Rev. Brent Hawkes, Chair of the Task Force on Inclusive Language, on the progress of the Task Force. He reported that there has been some response since the Draft Report was issued in October of 1980.

Almost all the response about the proposed guidelines on gender has been supportive. Rev. Hawkes reports almost no comment received on the proposals regarding racially inclusive language. Much of the response has been on the proposed revisions of the Fellowship Statement of Faith. He reports that this input has been generally supportive of these proposals. The Task Force has received some suggestioned changes to its proposed Statement of Faith, which will be considered at its final meeting in Detroit, following the Ministers Conference in late March.

Rev. Hawkes did report that some suggested changes to the Statement of Faith which had been received proposed changes in the *substance* of the Statement—dealing with theological content or definitions. Since the Task Force is authorized only to look at language, suggested changes in substance are being referred to the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission. The only exception is those changes of substance dealing with male/female images.

In conclusion, Rev. Hawkes characterized the suggestions received as generally good and representing viewpoints from across the spectrum of opinion. He emphasized that there has been an on-going process of allowing opportunity for input to the Task Force, and that until its final meeting in late March input is still welcomed and encouraged.

(A detailed look at the Final Report of the Task Force on Inclusive Language will appear in the May/June issue of IN UNITY.)

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The Second Part of OUR NEW
MCC CLERGY will appear in the
May/June issue.
.....

IN THE FELLOWSHIP

STI Executive Director Named

The Board of Regents has appointed Dr. Richard J. Follett to the new position of Executive Director of Samaritan Theological Institute. Dr. Follett is also appointed as Administrative Dean of the Resident College of STI.

Dr. Follett holds a Doctor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Michigan, which he received in August of 1980. His doctoral dissertation, titled On Teaching Gay Literature, was an exploration of the need for studying gay literature, characterizing its students and teachers, examining obstacles to and motivations for teaching the subject, and suggesting teaching strategies for teaching gay literature. Dr. Follett brings an impressive list of credentials—as a student, a writer, and a teacher—to his positions at STI. His professional memberships include the American Civil Liberties Union, the Gay Academic Union (national and Los Angeles), the Modern Language Association (general membership and gay caucus) and the National Council of Teachers of English. He is also Co-Chair of the NCTE's Committee on Concerns of Lesbians and Gay Males in the English Profession.

In the May/June IN UNITY—in an in-depth look at Samaritan Theological Institute—Dr. Follett will communicate his view of the roles of the various STI programs in the UFMCC, and will share some of his vision for the future development and impact that STI can have, both within the Fellowship and in the larger religious community.

UFMCC STOPS SLANDER BY "NEW RIGHT"!

In the fall of 1979, the organization American Christian Cause, one of the largest of the new right-wing, religious political groups, along with the so-called Moral Majority, began their campaign to try to destroy the gains made by various human rights groups in America.

Most of the rhetoric stretches from the ridiculous to the sublime. As observed in an editorial column by Carole Hemingway, published in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* on February 10, 1981: "The new American demagogues are sometimes clad in clerical robes, sometimes in the conventional garb of lawmakers. In Arizona, state Rep. Jim Ratliff stated that abortion would be acceptable only 'in case a colored man raped a young girl and she became pregnant.' He said it would be wrong to have a 17-year-old give birth to a 'colored man's child.' But what if the pregnancy were caused by a white rapist? Would he then approve of abortion?"

The column continued, "The America which was settled in large part by those fleeing religious persecution is endangered in 1981 by religious 'persecution.' The Rev. Roger Wagner of Sonora, CA, opposing legislation banning discrimination against homosexuals in hiring and firing, thunders, 'Civil authority does not spring from the consent of the governed, but from God.' Whose God? Have you ever met a demagogue who didn't co-opt God for his cause? Even Hitler invoked the Almighty. So does the Ayatollah Khomeini." Ms. Hemingway concluded by noting, "Let the would-be demagogues talk all they want. Let them proclaim they have The Truth, a direct line to God. Just don't let them have power. That would be un-American."

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has become a special target of the new religious right. One of the first fund-raising letters sent out by American Christian Cause to its donor list started out with the heading: "Let's Put A Stop To 'Gay' Churches Using the Bible To Promote Homosexuality" and ended with a plea for contributions to develop information packets to send to

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IN THE FELLOWSHIP

ministers. In between, the letter stated: "Right now, somewhere in the United States, ministers are ordaining homosexuals and uniting homosexual couples in the name of God. But, the most blasphemous actions are being carried out by the rapidly expanding Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches." This letter was dated September 6, 1979, and signed by Rev. Robert G. Grant, the Executive Director of American Christian Cause.

On February 2, 1980, another letter was sent to members of American Christian Cause. That letter stated: "I'm writing you this letter because I know you share my anger at anyone who falsely uses the Bible and the Word of God . . . and right this minute, on a radio show called 'Just As I Am' the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) is promoting homosexuality as another part of Christ's love to mankind. The homosexuals would like to put this program on every radio station in America! . . . As your leader of American Christian Cause, I want you to know that I am filled with anger at this sacrilegious attempt to undermine the Holy Word of God . . . and I will not rest until all America knows the sinister plot of Reverend Troy Perry's 'gay' church." Again, people were asked to send gifts and were told that "for every gift of \$10.00 or more" the donor would receive five copies of their brochure *How Homosexuals Are Using the Church in America*.

The UFMCC offices obtained a copy of that brochure. The Board of Elders was shocked when it read the brochure and discovered that American Christian Cause had deliberately lied and slandered the Fellowship with a comment about the founding and naming of MCC. The brochure opened by stating: "Troy Perry is an ordained minister, the divorced father of two children. In 1968, after the breakup of his marriage and the loss of his church, he founded the 'Church of Sodom' in Hollywood, California. That Church has since changed its name and is now called the Metropolitan Community Church."

The Board of Elders contacted Fellowship attorney Herbert E. Selwyn to institute a suit against American Christian Cause for slander if a retraction was not forthcoming concerning the "Church of Sodom" statement. The Board of Elders reiterated that the UFMCC was never called anything except the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, and that the statement by American Christian Cause is a deliberate lie to try to discredit the UFMCC.

The Fellowship's attorney did contact the American Christian Cause, demanding a retraction of their statement, and promising a lawsuit for slander if such was not forthcoming. Before a slander suit could be filed, American Christian Cause agreed to mail the following retraction to its donor list:

"In our pamphlet called 'How Homosexuals Are Using the Church in America,' we have used language that appeared to state that the Metropolitan Community Church had originally been named the 'Church of Sodom.' This was not intended.

"Because the term used in our pamphlet had quotation marks around it, therein we thought it characterized our opinion rather than the official name. To correct any misimpression that may have been caused, we wish to state that the Metropolitan Community Church was never named 'The Church of Sodom,' nor was it ever called that by Reverend Troy Perry or any officer of Metropolitan Community Church. Our use of that term was in reference to the characterization set forth in the book 'The Unhappy Gays,' written by Reverend Tim LaHaye."

transitions

Probably one of the most interesting families to attend and be involved in the life of the earliest Metropolitan Community Church, in Los Angeles, was the Bilbeys.

Jim Bilbey and his lover, Bob Belvill, had been personal friends of the Reverend Troy Perry before Metropolitan Community Church was founded. They attended the founding service of the Metropolitan Community Church on October 6, 1968, along with Jim's non-gay brother Don, and Don's wife Carmen. These four were among the original twelve who, with the Reverend Perry, were in attendance at that first service. Jim's sister Helen also occasionally attended Metropolitan Community Church.

When the original property at 22nd and Union Streets in Los Angeles was purchased, the Board of Directors of the church hired Jim's father, Mr. John Bilbey, as general contractor for the initial repairs on the church building.

The entire family, John, Betty (Jim's mother), Jim, Helen and Don, attended the dedication of this first property owned by Metropolitan

Community Church. Through the years, the Bilbeys continued their involvement and contact with Metropolitan Community Church, through their friendships with Reverend Perry.

Christmas of 1980, all the members of the family gathered in Los Angeles for the holidays (Jim and Helen no longer live in southern California). Christmas eve, after opening gifts, Don left his parents' home to walk one block to a small grocery store.

Don never made it to that store. He was savagely attacked by unknown assailants, across the street from his parents' house. Before an ambulance could arrive, he bled to death in the arms of his brother Jim.

On New Years Eve day, the Reverend Perry conducted the funeral service at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. Don was the second member of the "original twelve," those who attended that first service of the Metropolitan Community Church, to pass away. Earlier last year, Mr. Lynn Norris, another member of that group, died of a heart attack in Palm Springs, California.

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RESOURCES

CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND HOMOSEXUALITY, *Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*; University of Chicago Press; 1980; 424 pages; \$27.50.

About a year and a half ago, the Southern California grapevine was buzzing about this new book by Dr. John Boswell, an assistant professor of medieval history at Yale University. It was rumored that he was preparing a scholarly review of Christian attitudes and actions toward homosexuality. Dr. Boswell was reportedly fluent with ancient Greek, Latin and Arabic, as well as several European languages.

In the book, Boswell indeed delves into the text and intent of the Scriptures, and deals specifically with the lexicography of Saint Paul. He builds an understanding

NEWS FLASH

In early February, the Toronto, Canada, police raided several gay baths, arresting more than 250 citizens and 20 bath employees. The names of the married men arrested were subsequently published in a local newspaper. Newspapers also reported as many as 5,000 local citizens marching in protest of the raids—an unprecedented event in Canada.

In response to the raids by police, the Rev. Brent Hawkes, pastor of MCC-Toronto, began a fast, demanding that the Attorney General or another responsible government agency investigate the raids and police conduct. Through long weeks, he continued his fasting and prayer vigil. Although the Toronto City Council, by 11-9, voted early in March to request the Attorney General to investigate police conduct, the Attorney General refused, as did the city's Human Relations Commission. Rev. Hawkes continued to fast.

Finally, on March 12th, in response to Rev. Hawkes' fast and the prayers of MCC people around the world—and in an unprecedented move—the City Council voted, by 23-0, to conduct its own inquiry of the raids and the conduct of Toronto police! Rev. Hawkes ended his fast with many thanks to MCC congregations and others who had supported him, and with praise to God for moving the City Council to assume responsibility.

of the Judeo and Hellenistic-Roman cultures, and demonstrates that the early church seemed tolerant of social minorities, including gay people. Indeed, there were exceptions, which Boswell shows were due to mistaken concepts of Aristotelian and Mosaic law, which taught that anal, oral, and trans-sexual proclivities were characteristics of the hare, weasel, and hyena respectively, and were therefore forbidden as "unclean." Boswell traces the rise of intolerance in society from the removal of legal validation of same sex marriages through the suppression of homosexuals by the Justinian Code, and demonstrates that these occurred for the purpose of extirpating political rivals.

Boswell documents that the homophobia of the Visigoths in Spain was replaced by the let-live attitude of their Islamic conquerors, although the Muslims did "criticize the Christian clergy for their particular addiction to the practice" of homosexuality. The prelates seemed less concerned about their publicly gay clergy than they did about those who remained heterosexually married.

Boswell relates that during the twelfth century, some literature began to circulate which was hostile to gays; he shows that

this intolerance grew from an irrational fear of non-Christians, heretics, and witchcraft. In the fourteenth century, the anti-gay dogma of the church was crystallized by Thomas Aquinas, who found homosexuality and celibacy to both be "unnatural" acts, but thought the former was immoral — because it was immoral!

The book is well indexed and includes appendices of translated writings from the early church to the fourteenth century.

Boswell challenges the very roots of western moral assumptions. He tears off the prejudice enshrouding certain New Testament words that some moralists use to justify their indignation against a socially vulnerable minority. And he puts interest into usually dry textual matters, which take on the personality of a fast moving plot. The author does at first put the reader *en garde* by heavily lacing the book with copious and thick footnotes, but he also disarms the reader with lively bits of trivia from the distant past.

When sexuality becomes stigmatized by morality, it is important that scholars examine the causes of such stigma. Dr. Boswell accomplishes this very well, and does so without polemics.

by Phil Straw

COMING UP

IN THE MAY/JUNE ISSUE

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

An In-depth look at UFMCC's Samaritan Theological Institute

GROWTH IN GRACE

Christian Education for the Local Church

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The Final Report of the Elder's Task Force

PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH:

Prayer and Fasting for Christian Growth

IN THE FELLOWSHIP and IN THE NEWS

Plus: LETTERS, FORUM, REFLECTIONS, IN MINISTRY, FEEDBACK, and RESOURCES



THE REVEREND ELDER TROY D. PERRY BEING BAPTISED
IN THE RIVER JORDAN BY THE REVEREND ELDER JERI ANN HARVEY
DURING UFMCC HOLY LAND TOUR IN NOVEMBER 1980